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THE INDEPENDENT

N° 3,375

THURSDAY 14 AUGUST 1997

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Victory! Change of heart to help students

Judith Judd and Lucy Ward

Ministers last night backed down over plans to force most students taking a gap year before university to pay tuition fees. The decision was announced as examination boards revealed record pass-rates for this year's A-level exams.

The education minister Baroness Blackstone said that all 19,000 students who had received deferred offers of university places for 1998 would be exempt throughout their courses from the Government's decision to charge £1,000-a-year tuition fees and abolish maintenance grants.

Ministers said at the weekend that only those students who did at least three months' voluntary work would be exempt - around 2,000. But the announcement led to protests from charities, students and university administrators who predicted chaos as thousands of applicants tried to get into university this year.

The National Union of Students said that it would back a legal challenge on behalf of students taking a "gap year", claiming that it would be a breach of contract to charge them tuition fees.

The change of heart came as the annual scramble for university places began with the publication of this year's A-level results, distributed to candidates today. The pass rate is up by 1.3 per cent to 87.1 per cent, the 16th successive rise. However, the percentage awarded an A grade has remained the same, at 16 per cent.

There is a strong case in natural justice that the 19,000 or so students accepted for 1998 were accepted on existing financial terms and should be allowed to matriculate on 1997's conditions.

Yesterday's Independent advice

Students who have failed to get the grades they need to meet their conditional offers of places can enter the clearing process run by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) which matches students to spare places.

This morning there are 24,000 courses with vacancies in British universities and higher education colleges - an increase of 19 per cent on last year. The rise could be the result of an increase in the total number of courses. The biggest increase is in modern languages, which account for more than 15 per cent of all vacancies, and in engineering and business.

News of the improved pass-rate prompted the annual controversy over exam standards. The Institute of Management warned that employers were increasingly concerned about the value of "Britain's gold standard."

But Baroness Blackstone said: "We are absolutely committed to maintaining standards in all national qualifications. There are rigorous procedures in place to ensure that standards are maintained between examinations boards, between subjects from year to year."

The U-turn by ministers over

gap-year students should make the clearing process less frenetic than had been expected.

David Willetts, Conservative education spokesman, said that the Government had conducted a "complete shambles. They began by denouncing people's concerns over this as scaremongering", he said. "Then they announced, on an unattributable basis, a concession that turned out to be tiny."

"They have caused unnecessary concern and anxiety to thousands of students by their incompetence."

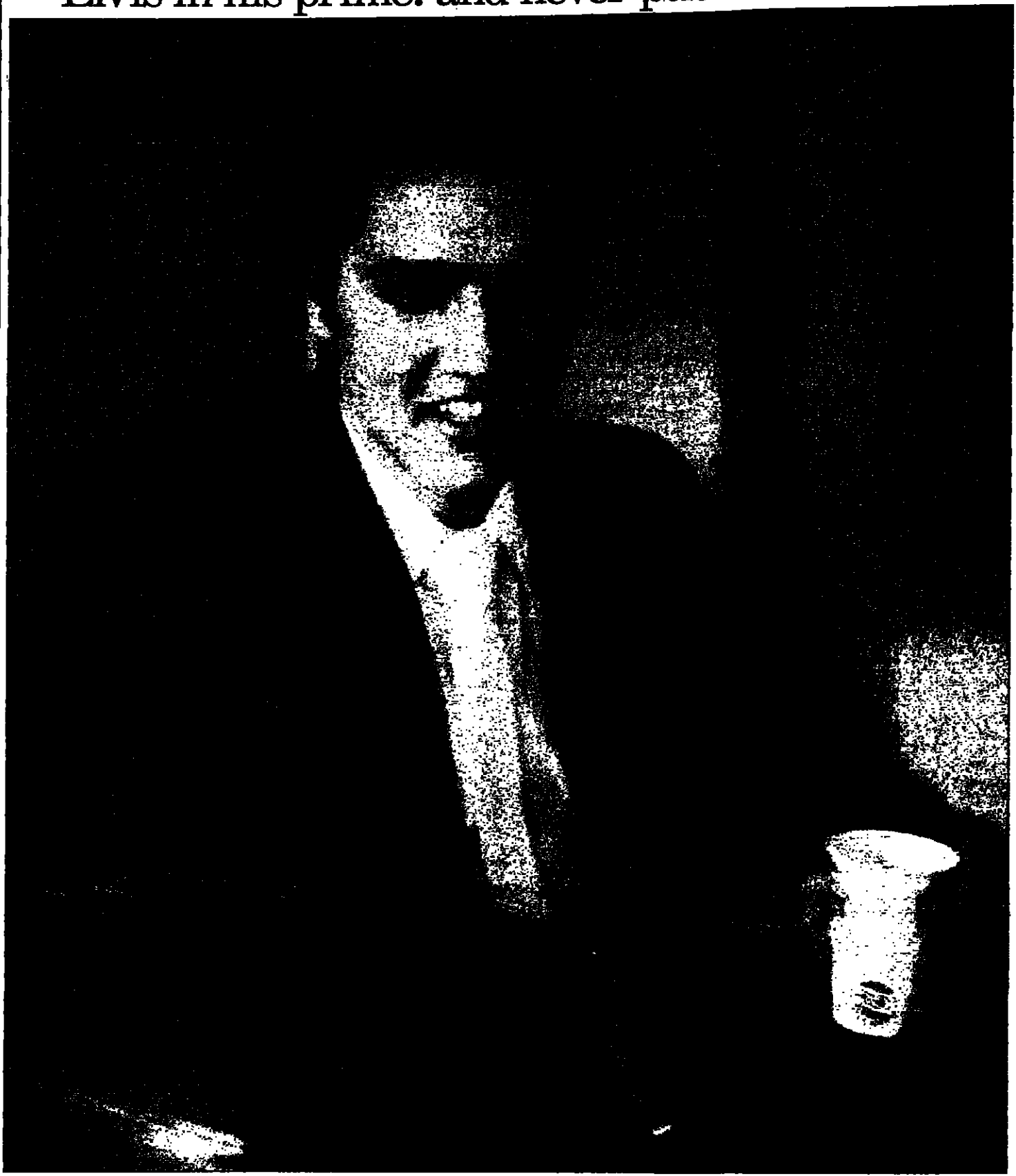
Government sources said that the decision had been taken "in the interests of fairness and administrative simplicity". They had always intended to look at the issue but had no firm figures until last Friday. "We have listened to representations made by industry and voluntary groups. This is an example of a listening government," the sources said.

But the national volunteer agency, Community Service Volunteers, called for a year's exemption from fees for every young person who invested between four and twelve months in service to the community during a gap year. Ministers are understood to be considering the suggestion.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, who wrote to David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, calling for a rethink over the fee waiver, welcomed the Government's announcement.

Letters, page 13

Elvis in his prime: and never published before



Boy who would be King: Elvis Presley, who died 20 years ago on Saturday, on a train tour soon after signing with RCA records in 1956. This image has not been published before outside the United States; David Usborne in Memphis, page 3. Alfred Wertheimer/Contact Press/Colorinc

Labour taskforce to help underclass

Donald Macintyre

Tony Blair has taken a crucial step towards restoring Labour's claim to be a party for the poor by ordering the establishment of an unprecedented and high-powered unit to bring "the underclass" back into mainstream society.

The Prime Minister's decision to draft high-flying civil servants from a wide range of departments into the new unit, which will operate at Cabinet Office level, represents the first concerted government effort to tackle the growing problems of those Labour refers to as the socially excluded.

The new unit, which will report directly to Mr Blair, and will be announced by Peter Mandelson, minister without portfolio, today, represents a startlingly ambitious effort to redeem the Prime Minister's pledge to give new hope to the most disadvantaged in society. Mr Mandelson will argue in his Fabian lecture today that Labour's commitment to those excluded from society gives the lie to criticisms like those of Roy Hattersley, the former deputy party leader, that Labour no longer believes in a more equal society.

The "Social Exclusion Unit", as it will be known, whose establishment has been the subject of intense activity in Whitehall since Mr Blair's post-election "one nation" speech at the Aylesbury estate in Southwark, south London, will be headed by Robin Young, a senior deputy secretary in the Cabinet Office's economic and domestic sec-

Mandelson launches fresh attack on BBC

Labour's chief spin doctor Peter Mandelson has launched a fresh attack on BBC journalists in the wake of on-air clashes between him and broadcasters over claims that he had manipulated the media, writes Donald Macintyre.

In an interview with *The Independent* today he says: "There are as many macho BBC editors manipulating the news as there are party spin doctors, and as for some of the political correspondents they are vaulting over each other in their ambition to take Robin Oakley's job. [Oakley is the BBC's Political Editor] Hopefully Robin will be around for a long time."

Mr Mandelson (pictured) accused the



BBC correspondent John Sopel, who suggested publicly that he had been actively encouraged to pursue the story about an

investigation into the leaking of classified information to Chris Patten's biographer Jonathan Dimbleby, of "vanity broadcasting". And he strongly defended his conduct of a combative interview with BBC Radio 4's *World at One*, when he asked: "Why should we accept the BBC's agenda, which is essentially about itself and its own preoccupation with itself and my role, at the expense of the listeners' interest in the Government's record?"

Mr Mandelson said: "You don't usually make converts when you take on a BBC interviewer but my postbag suggests the public likes politicians who stand up for themselves."

tarial. The Prime Minister pledged in that speech that there would be "no forgotten people in the Britain I want to build" and added that he was determined to turn round the "dead weight of low expectations, the crushing belief that things cannot get better."

With a heavy emphasis on preventing social exclusion, rather than merely ameliorating its effects, the unit will be given exceptional clout as it will be able to stake a claim for

funds freed up by government department spending reviews ordered throughout Whitehall.

The formation of the unit, which will work closely with the No 10 Policy Unit, will initially target those issues where ministers and officials believe rapid results can be achieved. These include action on disaffected youth, including new measures to deal with school exclusion, truancy and juvenile crime, as well as an inter-departmental drive to prevent

teenagers from children's homes from drifting into homelessness and crime.

Its remit will specifically include a "racial dimension" in recognition that people from ethnic minority groups figure disproportionately highly among the long-term unemployed, lone parents, and those expelled or excluded from school. A central premise of the unit will be Mr Blair's concern that millions of pounds are spent by different agencies, of

ten on the same people and with the minimum of co-ordination and effectiveness. He said in his Southwark speech there were "literally dozens of public agencies" on every poor housing estate, "all often doing good work but all often working at cross purposes".

The unit will be one of the most prestigious in Whitehall and senior officials will be drafted from a series of other departments, such as health, education and employment, environment and the Home Office, to co-ordinate the drive.

Mr Mandelson, who as a minister in the Cabinet Office has been closely involved in planning the unit, will today pledge that Labour will not tolerate a society in which "a significant minority at the bottom of the social ladder, who are at best on the edge of the labour force", continue to be excluded from opportunities.

Ministers believe that if the unit succeeds it will serve the dual purpose of easing social divisions and crime while in the medium to long term also make savings in the huge benefits bill. It is intended to complement the Welfare to Work programme announced in the budget by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, which will be funded by the £5bn windfall tax. But the unit's work also reflects a shift in the role of the Cabinet Office as a central department working directly to the Prime Minister.

Among the target groups identified by ministers are the 5 million families where no one of working age is employed, the 3 million people living on the 1,300 worst housing estates in Britain and the 3 million people who remain in the bottom 20 per cent of the income range for four years in succession. Other target groups, besides the unemployed 18- to 24-year-olds, include low achievers who leave school without qualifications and the young homeless.

Master of spin goes in to bat Interview, page 14

Unemployment falls to lowest for 17 years

The number of people out of work fell to its lowest level for 17 years yesterday, offering the prospect of a golden period of strong economic growth, low inflation and falling unemployment, writes Tom Stevenson.

Official jobless figures showed an unexpectedly large fall in the jobless rate by 49,800 to 1.55 million, the lowest unemployment rate since September 1980. Despite the rapid rate of job creation, average

earnings increased by only 4.25 per cent in the year to July, the same rate as a month earlier. This helped to calm fears that growth in jobs would stoke wage inflation.

That meant that the Bank of

England was able to promise a pause in the recent run of interest rate rises. The Bank said the prospects for inflation were looking bright.

Full details, page 16
Business comment, page 17

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QUICKLY
Student shot dead
A British student survived with injuries and her boyfriend was killed when a lift as they travelled in Israel opened fire. Page 4

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THE LONDON INSTITUTE

news

significant shorts

City leaders call for action to stop London sinking

London's business and political leaders united yesterday to urge the Government to act over the rise in London's ground water levels which could cause widespread damage to communications systems, property and the underground. The city lies on a water basin and ground water is rising by as much as three metres a year. The damage could begin within five to ten years and cost billions of pounds.

A coalition including Sir Roger Cook, the Lord Mayor of London, and the chairman of the London Underground, Peter Ford, has written to the John Prescott asking him to take overall responsibility for implementing a "water policy". London Underground already has to deal with regular flooding in parts of its network and has to pump 14 million litres of water from the system every day.

From 1850 for about 100 years, industries abstracted water from their own use, keeping the water table manageably low. But in the Sixties, heavy users either relocated out of London or closed down. Water levels have risen by 35m in 30 years. **Kate Watson-Smyth**

Flash floods left a number of villages isolated and several roads closed in central Scotland last night. In Lanarkshire the village of Shotts was reported to be under a foot of water.

Early release for IRA prisoners

Dublin yesterday moved to reinforce republican confidence in the resumed peace process in advance of next month's multi-party talks by releasing two IRA prisoners.

The two were not amongst the most important prisoners and the Irish government decision, though less than a month after the latest IRA cessation, appears to be a minimal first step reflecting general caution following the abrupt ending of the first ceasefire in February last year. Gerard Burke, of Dublin, was serving four years for offences linked to a robbery. Thomas Flynn of Cork was jailed for six months for assault. Burke was due to be released next June and Flynn in October this year. **Alan Murdoch**

Ronnie Biggs digs in his heels



Britain and Brazil opened the way yesterday for Great Train Robbery fugitive Ronnie Biggs (left) to be extradited when the two countries ratified a long-awaited extradition treaty. But there is no certainty that the 68-year-old will ever set foot on British soil. After originally saying that he would not try to fight extradition, Biggs vowed at the weekend that he would rather die than be brought back to jail in Britain. Years of legal wrangling in the Brazilian courts could be in prospect.

Brazil has a statute of limitation on crimes committed more than 20 years ago. Biggs has been on the run for 32 years after escaping from Wandsworth jail in 1965 while serving a 30-year sentence. **Patricia Wynn Davies**

Field denies U-turn on war pensions

Social Security minister Frank Field yesterday denied allegations from the Royal British Legion that the Government had broken pre-election pledges on war pensions. Veterans' leaders are furious about the Government's refusal to initiate a dedicated review on an anomaly that allows councils to deprive war pensioners of up to 75 per cent of their pensions by taking them into account when calculating means-testing housing benefit and council tax benefits. Mr Field said the onus for action was on the local authorities.

Industrial action at Barclays Bank

The union representing more than two-thirds of Barclays Bank staff today announced industrial action short of a strike to start next Thursday. The union, the UNIFI, is objecting to a newly imposed pay and grading scheme.

Montague Lewis & Pickwick Records

In the article "The BBC Lollipops: treasure trove of great classics found in radio archives" (18 April) we wrongly stated that when the BBC entered a joint venture with Montague Lewis in 1990 to exploit its classical archives he was head of Pickwick Records. In fact, his 26-year involvement in that company had ended in 1988.

In 1994 Pickwick was granted a licence to market 100 discs of recordings from the archives and, contrary to the suggestion in the article, at that time it was already a wholly owned subsidiary of Carlton Communications plc. The BBC gave its approval to the packaging of these discs before their release.

We are sorry for any contrary impression given.

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France	£18.10	Portugal	£3.25
Germany	£18.10	Spain	£3.25
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people



Dudley Moore with his wife Nicole on their wedding day

Dudley Moore finds fourth time unlucky in love

Dudley Moore's on-again, off-again marriage is off again, it emerged yesterday. The British-born star of the hit film *Arthur* has filed for divorce from his wife Nicole in Los Angeles Superior Court on the grounds of irreconcilable differences after months of public spats and charges of abuse.

In court papers, Moore said the paternity of the couple's two-year-old son, Nicholas, was in question and that there was a pending legal action to determine if he was the father.

The court action followed a reconciliation last month between the 62-year-old comedian and his 33-year-old fourth wife after she went on television and accused him of beating and terrorising her, making her take drugs and forcing her to dance for him in her underwear for up to 20 hours a day.

Nicole Moore filed a \$10m damages suit in May against her husband and announced plans to divorce

him. He had already filed for divorce from her in 1996 but that suit was dropped.

In her damages suit against Moore, Nicole Rothchild Moore alleged that he repeatedly pushed, hit and choked her. She also alleged that he forced her to take amphetamines that led to her suffering a stroke.

Her lawyer, Kenneth Chyten, said at the time of the suit that Moore "had a strange power he was able to exert over her". Moore was arrested a month before the couple's April 1994 wedding for allegedly abusing her, but those charges were later dropped.

The diminutive actor, who has been based in Hollywood for the last 18 years, recently announced that he would return to Britain this year to star in *Parade*. It is his first pantomime role and a distinct change of pace and lifestyle. He will play Buttons in a production of *Cinderella* in Southampton and the production will not transfer to the West End. **Kate Watson-Smyth**

Dietrich gives name to new Berlin square

After years of debate over how to honour their famed daughter, Germans soon will be able to send a letter with a Marlene Dietrich stamp to a brand new Marlene Dietrich square in Berlin.

The stamp, good for mail within Europe, features a portrait of the legendary film star and cabaret singer with lips pursed and a sultry look in her eyes. It goes on sale today. Two weeks later, on August 28, Berlin officials are to give final approval to a plan to create a Marlene Dietrich square in the massive Potsdamer Platz complex under construction in Berlin.

Officials in the adjacent neighbourhood of Schoeneberg, where Dietrich was born, signed on to the Potsdamer Platz initiative Wednesday, admitting their 5-year-old effort to agree on a suitable



piece of property to rename after her had failed.

Some residents, still bitter over Dietrich's support for the Allies in World War II, opposed any recognition for her in Berlin. "She betrayed our people," said Manfred Grave, 54, voicing a common opinion among respondents to a recent survey by the Berliner Morgenpost newspaper. More than two-thirds of callers opposed honouring the actress, who died in 1992.

Berlin, Associated Press

Noel and Liam open up for BBC

Despite his penchant for anthemic rock songs Noel Gallagher declares there is nothing for the youth of the Nineties to believe in anymore in a documentary to be shown next week. Instead Noel and his brother Liam extol the virtues of having fun in *Oasis: Right Here Right Now* which will be shown next Wednesday on BBC1, the night before the band's new album goes on sale.

In their longest ever television interview Noel denies being spokesman for his generation although he admits: "We'd definitely be leading the march if there was anywhere to march to."

Liam says: "I want to have fun... I'm 24 years of age and I'm in the most important rock and roll band in the world... how could I not have fun? I've got a load of money, what am I going to do; sit at home and clip my **** toenails?"

Berlin, Associated Press

briefing

EMPLOYMENT

Teachers steering men away from childcare

Men are steered away from jobs in childcare by their teachers, according to a study of why 99 per cent of workers in the sector are women.

The report by researchers at the London University's Institute of Education reveals that women see childcare work less as a professional occupation than as a continuation of their family and domestic experiences.

Women students felt the work was something they were "naturally good at", with the majority believing childcare training confirmed their maternal and domestic roles. That "presents some difficulties for men on the course", researchers found.

The study for the Department for Education and Employment suggests men experience more barriers getting into childcare training and were recommended by their teachers at school to do other kinds of work.

It also finds that many students, both men and women, who train for childcare have been low academic achievers. **Lucy Ward**

WILDLIFE

Frisbee, killer whale style



Killer whales are using 6ft-wide sting rays to play Frisbee before eating them, a scientist's study has revealed.

Like cats, killer whales are renowned for playing with their food. They appear to have invented the Frisbee game to avoid being stung by the rays' barbed tails. The strange behaviour was observed by Ingrid Visser, a research student at Auckland University, who spent two years studying killer whales off New Zealand.

She watched 19 whales, mostly male, pursue and eat 55 stingrays, some of which measured two metres across. On one occasion two whales ate 18 stingrays in a six-hour binge.

Normally one killer whale would dive down to find a ray on the sea bed and then signal the others. Ms Visser had observed whales in water as deep as 120ft, often doing headstands.

The study was reported in *New Scientist* and said: "Sometimes a whale flips the ray out of the water before tossing it around like a Frisbee with at least one other whale. Visser says this may be an attempt to reposition the ray so the whale can eat it without being stung."

It was also thought adult whales may use the game to show youngsters how to tackle dangerous prey.

TRAVEL

Airport passengers at record high

Major airports in the United Kingdom handled a record number of passengers last month, despite the British Airways' cabin crew strike, it was announced yesterday.

A total of 10.2m passengers passed through the seven airports run by the airport operator BAA in July 1997. This was an increase of 6 per cent on July 1996 and the highest monthly figure ever, BAA said.

The figure could have been even higher as BAA reckoned the three-day BA strike lost around 200,000 passengers.

The European charter market had the biggest growth last month - increasing 12.3 per cent and helping to boost Gatwick airport passenger numbers by 12.4 per cent.

COMPUTERS

Data spreads a bit of trouble

Computer spreadsheets can be hazardous to your financial health, according to an American scientist who has found that the programs - widely used for all sorts of fiscal forecasting and planning - demand more accuracy than humans can provide. The result can cost companies hundreds or even millions of pounds.

Professor Raymond Panko of the University of Hawaii, Honolulu, discovered that people on average make a mistake typing data into one in every hundred "cells" - a location on a grid - of a spreadsheet, which is a piece of software that can build up complex mathematical relationships between any cell. Spreadsheets are routinely used, for example, to analyse variations in financial performance or predict the effect of interest rate changes.

But spreadsheets can be so complex, and rely so heavily on data from a particular cell, that a single error can be disastrous. Professor Panko found over the course of a decade that 30 per cent of all spreadsheets he has examined contain flaws - some serious.

If a quantity is entered incorrectly, or the formula linking one cell to another is written wrongly, the result can be far from correct. "Human beings do not err often," he says in today's *New Scientist*. "But in large spreadsheets with many hundreds of cells, the normal human error rate is fatal."

Charles Arthur

SCIENCE

Jupiter whips up 380mph winds

The next time gales wreak havoc with our lives, it may be helpful to remember that the winds on Jupiter make our storms seem like mild breezes by comparison.

Data that has emerged from the *Galileo* probe, which parachuted into Jupiter's thick atmosphere in December 1995, shows that Jovian winds can blow at up to 380mph. It shows wind speeds picking up with depth and reaching much greater velocities than had been estimated.

Scientists led by David Atkinson, from the University of Idaho in Moscow, USA, published their findings yesterday in the science journal *Nature*. The cause of the high winds is a mystery. "Whether these winds are driven by internal heat or absorbed sunlight remains uncertain," wrote the scientists.

HEALTH

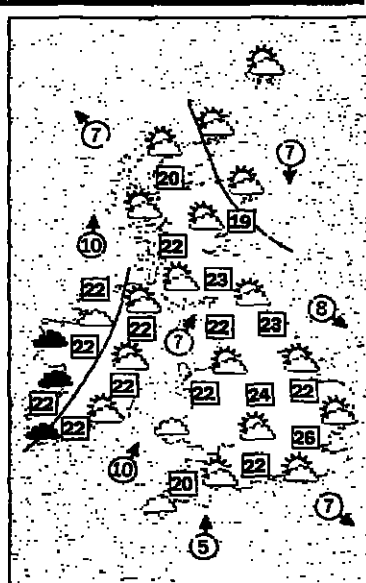
Molecule clue to breast cancer

Scientists have identified a molecule present in most breast cancers which appears to control the growth of cancer cells and could point the way to new treatments. Studies show levels of the molecule, called Brk, are higher in two-thirds of breast cancers but absent in normal breast tissue.

The finding, published in *Oncogene*, was made by a team at the Institute of Cancer Research, Dr Mark Crompton, leader of the team, said: "With further research, it may be possible to develop drugs that target Brk directly, thus stunting the tumour's growth, without impacting surrounding healthy cells."

Jeremy Laurence

WEATHER



General Situation and Outlook:

Eastern Scotland will start cloudy with showers in the far north-east. It should soon turn drier and brighter with sunny spells and isolated showers. Northern Ireland and western Scotland will be bright this morning with good sunny periods, but it will slowly cloud over this afternoon with a little showery rain in the western fringes by evening. Meanwhile, England and Wales will be fair and warm with sunny periods, although there may be some coastal mist and low cloud around in the south-west.

England and Wales will be very warm tomorrow with plenty of sunshine, although cooling sea-breezes will affect the coasts. Southern and eastern Scotland should have a good deal of dry weather and some hazy sunshine, but western Scotland and Northern Ireland will be cloudy with showery rain. The weekend will stay mainly fine and settled with sunshine in most places. Western Scotland and Northern Ireland will be cloudier at times with a little rain.

Aberdeen	c 22 72	Cardiff	sh 23 73	Isles of Scilly	f 21 70
Anglosey	f 17 65	Cork	f 21 70	Jersey	fg 19 65
Ayr	c 21 70	Dover	f 24 75	Lincoln	th 20 68
Belfast	f 18 64	Dublin	f 19 66	Liverpool	f 20 68
Birmingham	sh 21 70	Edinburgh	c 23 73	Lizard	f 20 68
Blackpool	f 19 65	Exeter	f 22 72	London	c 25 77
Bournemouth	f 22 73	Glasgow	c 24 75	Manchester	f 21 70
Brighton	f 21 70	Guernsey	s 21 70	Newcastle	sh 20 68
Bristol	f 21 70	Inverness	c 20 68	Nottingham	sh 21 70
Cardiff	f 21 70	Ipswich	f 25 77	Oxford	c 24 75

Lighting-up Times	
Today	20.25 to 5.46
London	20.25 to 5.46
Bristol	20.25 to 5.46
Birmingham	20.25 to 5.46
Manchester	20.25 to 5.46
Newcastle	20.25 to 5.46
Glasgow	20.25 to 5.46
Belfast	20.25 to 5.46

Air Quality	
Yesterday's Readings	NO ₂ O ₃
London	Moderate Good
S England	Good Moderate
Wales	Good Moderate
C England	Good Moderate
N England	Good Moderate
Scotland	Good Moderate
N Ireland	Good Good

Outlook for Today	
NO ₂	O ₃
London	Good Moderate
S England	Good Moderate
Wales	Good Moderate
C England	Good Moderate
N England	Good Moderate
Scotland	Good Moderate
N Ireland	Good Good

High Tides	
AM	PM
London	10.15 5.6 22.52 5.8
Liverpool	7.57 7.5 20.57 7.9
Abermouth	8.18 10.1 16.09 10.5
Hull (Albert Dock)	2.55 7.1 15.35 7.2
Glasgow	8.54 2.8 22.16 2.9
Drumlaigh	8.44 3.4 21.08 3.5

Sun and Moon	
Sun rises 5.43am	Sun sets 8.27pm
Moon rises 4.10am	Moon sets 12.30am
Full moon 16 August	

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هذا من الأصل

Strong pound sends shellfish trade plunging to the depths

Louise Jury

The British shellfish industry has been plunged into crisis by the strong pound, raising fears that half its fishermen and wholesalers will go bust by the end of the year.

Britain traditionally exports most of its catch and is making huge efforts to expand its home market in a bid to try to mitigate the problems with tough export markets.

But despite growing interest in molluscs and crustacea by the British consumer, fishermen fear that it will not be enough to offset the slump in trade abroad.

Jim Partridge, of the Montem fish company in Shoreham, Sussex, said: "If something doesn't happen soon, I would expect 50 per cent of fishermen and 50 per cent of merchants to go out of business by the end of the year."

Dr Clive Askew, of the Shellfish Association, which represents 400 retailers and fishermen from Scotland to Cornwall, said: "The news we get from around the coast is that it's very serious."

Mr Partridge said the pound

had risen so quickly that the margins they built in to absorb such increases were wiped out. Sometimes they were receiving less money than the fish were sold for.

The problem was compounded by the sluggish economies of France and Spain, the biggest markets for shellfish in the past, but whose populations could no longer afford to eat out as often as they once did.

In previous summers, the French would take a lorry-load of crab every day. This year it is one a week. "Europe is completely and utterly dead," Mr Partridge said.

Jeremy Brown, of Just Shellfish in Port Isaac, Cornwall, said prices usually levelled out after Easter at around £9 a kilo for lobster but were now hovering around £6.50 or £7. "We haven't seen prices this low in years and our expenses are the same as ever if not greater," he said.

And despite some optimism in the business about a growth at home, he did not hold out huge hopes for a growth in the home market. "I tried to sell fish door-to-door and there was very little interest. The average

housewife is put off by a bone. We don't eat fish or shellfish in Britain," he said.

Yet Dr Askew, from the Shellfish Association, said there were some signs of an interest in seafood, just as British cuisine in general has grown more adventurous in recent years.

"Supermarkets are looking very much more seriously at shellfish - some of it is to do with improving their image as they did by supplying wines." But there would need to be a "huge boost" in Britain offset the drop in exports.

Last year, 116,000 tonnes of shellfish, with a value of nearly £138m, were landed in the UK, an increase of 10,000 tonnes over five years ago. But the amount exported - 71,000 tonnes - has not changed over the same period. British consumers are buying more to eat at home and when they eat out, although much of this is prawns not caught in British waters.

A spokeswoman for Waitrose, often regarded as the trend-spotter in foods, said it had seen a significant increase in interest in shellfish in the last



Feeling the pinch: Shellfish has declined in popularity since Victorian times, when oyster stalls, below, were common. Today, a strong pound has ruined the export market, and the natives turn their noses up at delicacies like this brown crab, above. Photographs: Andrew Hasson (top), Hulton Getty

five years. "It's a very large market as far as we're concerned. We have 103 branches out of 115 with fresh fish counters which include shellfish," she said. Stock includes fresh oysters, mussels, scallops and langoustines.

Safeway sells pre-cooked British crabs and British oysters

and Marks and Spencer offer prawns and some small quantities of lobster at its London West End stores.

But fresh fish counters are still a rarity in high street supermarkets, and the number of fishmongers in Britain has declined significantly in recent years.



How the winkle lost out to the burger

Jack O'Sullivan

The strong pound may be destroying the shellfish industry, but its long term enemy is the British palate. The winkle pickers are gone, the jellied eel is a rarity, the whelk stall has all but disappeared. Burgers, chicken nuggets and chilled ready meals have ousted the ocean's own convenience foods from the everyday menu. We just don't seem to want shellfish anymore, which makes the exporters even more vulnerable to currency variations.

"Winkles and cockles used to be a regular feature of a Saturday and Sunday," says the famous Islington fishmonger, Steve Hatt jr. "People don't do it anymore." So yesterday in Fort William in the west of Scotland, the best of the shellfish

Jack O'Sullivan on the demise of a staple food

catch was not being bought locally. It was being collected straight from the boats by big Spanish lorries as they landed, to be consumed in Spain. "Most of what is landed here doesn't reach our shops," says Alan Brown, manager of the local Crannog Smoke House.

He also argues that the huge investment in equipment, including up to £100,000 for a reasonable boat, has driven up fishing costs. Then, says Steve Hatt, there is the expense of handling, purifying and transporting a food with a shelf life of perhaps five days, often too short for supermarkets. "The good old whelk costs more now to handle than it was worth when it was caught."

But British reluctance to buy is rooted in a long-standing fear of food poisoning. "In the 19th century, there were crises over the rearing of shellfish and associated disease," according to Tom Jaine, editor of *The Good Food Guide*. "There was lots of legislation to control production." These fears have been enhanced amid concern about pollution and knowledge that shellfish accumulate toxins. There is one rule when entertaining the Queen - never give her shellfish.

Indeed, though Elizabeth I introduced three fish days a week, this island nation has never taken full advantage of its marine resource. In 1863, WF Campbell, from Galloway, ob-

served that while his Scottish compatriots starved back home without properly harvesting the sea, the French poor consumed a huge range of creatures, in particular molluscs and shellfish.

Tom Jaine believes the British are unadventurous about food. "There is a tendency, more marked in the last century, to restrict the numbers of things considered edible. One presumes these restrictions are generally related to industrial development, distance from the land and from food production."

Emily Green, the food writer, is less charitable. "People are very suspicious unless it doesn't actually look like shellfish. So they will eat prawns which are

pink and packed in plastic and you won't hear them saying they are allergic to it.

"People say shellfish is complicated. But lobster is easy. You have to assault it a bit, but it is not complicated like owning a microwave or rehydrating space ice cream."

"The problem is that it's too real. It's alive. That can be scary. You have to do the killing. People are squeamish."

Diehards gather for the Haj of the church of Elvis

David Usborne
Memphis

Never mind that Geoff Cowley from Bradford lost his job as an international lorry driver just two months ago. He and his wife, Verna Marie, have had this trip booked for two years and nothing was going to stop them taking it. Mississippi, Memphis, Hawaii, Los Angeles and back to Yorkshire in just over three weeks.

This is not a holiday. It is a pilgrimage. It is the Haj of the Church of Elvis Presley - the King, the Cat, the Pelvis, the father of Rock 'n' Roll. Tupelo, Mississippi, is where he was born, Hawaii and Hollywood are where he made his films, but Mecca is here: Graceland, the Presley mansion in Memphis.

Each year they come, the diehards of the Elvis denomination, to this surprisingly unimposing stone home with its ridiculous pillared portico and its kitsch interior of velvet couches and mirrored ceilings, to observe the anniversary of their deity's passing.

This year is special - Saturday is the 20th anniversary of the day when the by-then bloated and drug-dependent performer collapsed in his bathroom and died aged 42.

The gospel according to his fans tells us that Elvis did not die, that he staged his demise to escape his fans or the Mafia or both. "Elvis Lives!" Geoff and Verna, who otherwise seem thoroughly normal folk, know that the body now lying in the Graceland "Meditation Garden", filled with ornaments and gifts from fans, is a fake.

The Second Coming, in fact, may be at hand. Perhaps, we ponder over an ice cream, Elvis might descend from a helicopter over the mansion to-



A photo of the infant crooner being auctioned by Bonhams

morrow evening when tens of thousands of his followers will be gathered around the house for a candle-light vigil. "That would be nice," Geoff observes casually, as if such an event would no more surprise than some old friend dropping by the pub unexpectedly.

At Zapp from New Jersey confides that Elvis is already in Memphis. "He is one of the impersonators," he says. "He will have changed his face some, but he is here." Zapp himself is one of the myriad look-alikes flocking to Memphis this week. And he is surely one of the sorriest ones, with his chipped aviator sunglasses and sweat-stained rayon shirt. An Elvis riff wafts

out from the nearby Elvis Presley Memphis theme restaurant and Zapp instantly begins an Elvis leg-shake - like a dog having its tummy scratched.

Just in case the helicopter never shows, Elvis Presley Enterprises, the company that runs Graceland, will ensure fans get the next best thing at Saturday night's "Elvis in Concert '97" at the Memphis Coliseum. With the magic of hologram technology, an apparition of Presley will rise up before the congregation and perform his most famous songs accompanied by some of his still-living former band members.

The real mystery of this re-

ligion is its power over so many. What is it that induces Geoff and Verna Marie and 900 other members of the British Elvis Presley Fan Club to spend their savings to come here?

Why are all these people, from around the world, crowding at the crazy-stone wall at the front of Elvis's state scouring vainly for just one square-inch space of virgin rock to scrawl their message of worship? "Elvis, we can't cry hard enough", and, "Twenty years - twenty million tears", and, "Most wanted you, Many need you and All loved you, Michelle 1997".

Why are these women pressing five-deep at the stage of the downtown Daisy Theater on Tuesday night gasping for Darrell Dunfill, a 53-year-old from Florida, who works full-time as an Elvis impersonator? Occasionally, Darrell takes a nylon scarf and, just as Elvis did, mops the sweat from his chest and wraps it around the neck of one of the women. Delicious, she takes it as if it were communion itself.

"I don't know how you explain it," said Rodd Morgan, a spokesman for Elvis Presley Enterprises, which, headed by Priscilla Presley, first opened Graceland to the public in 1982. The gate-tally of 350,000 fans who passed through in that first year has grown to three-quarters of a million fans now; of those more than half are under 35 years old.

Verna Marie's 18-month-old grand-daughter back in Bradford will only go to sleep at night if an Elvis song is played to her. She accepts that it is worship and that the cult of Elvis is a religion. "I believe in two men, Elvis and Jesus Christ," she offers. What about him beside her, Geoff? "Him? No."

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news

Student tells of attack on the Red Sea road



Max Hunter, a law student from Surrey, who died in the attack

Boyfriend shot dead after couple hitch lift to kibbutz

Eric Silver
in Jerusalem

A British student who saw her boyfriend shot dead and was injured herself by a man who gave them a lift as they travelled in Israel described the attack to *The Independent* last night.

Charlotte Gibb, 20, from a village near Peterborough, told how the attacker shot and killed Max Hunter, a 22-year-old law student from Banstead, Surrey, on the desert road north from the Red Sea resort of Eilat before dawn yesterday.

Ms Gibb, who was at Durham University with Mr Hunter, was out of danger in a Beersheba hospital, where she was recovering from surgery for fractures to an arm. She had shot gun injuries to her face and hands.

Her voice faltered, close to tears. Her speech was slurred, as if she were feeling the effect of the pain-killing drugs doctors administered after she came out of the operating theatre. She still referred to her boyfriend in the present tense, though she knew he was dead.

"Max had arranged for us to go to a kibbutz near Tiberias," she said. "We were hitching a lift from Eilat. A man who looked about forty or fifty picked us up. I was in the back seat with our bags. Max, who speaks Hebrew, sat in the front talking to the driver. I fell asleep."

"The next thing I knew, Max was shaking my leg, saying 'Are you awake?' We had stopped somewhere in the desert. The car lights were off, and it was pitch dark. The moon was hidden. The driver had got out and was looking for something. He asked us to put

our bags in the boot, which we did.

"The driver lit a cigarette. We thought we'd have one too. Suddenly I saw yellow flashes. I thought this can't really be happening. He shot Max, then before I could try to get away he shot me."

"I lay behind the car, pretending to be dead. He shot Max again, then came back and shot me again. Then he drove off. I thought this is it. I'm going to die. I was losing blood. I was half unconscious, but managed to drag myself to the road. I shouted for my boyfriend, but I knew he was dead. After about half an hour, a van of Israeli soldiers rescued me."

The soldiers raised the alarm and a military helicopter evacuated Ms Gibb to Seroka hospital, where she arrived about 4.15am. The killer's motive was as puzzling to Ms Gibb as it was to the police.

Although she could not follow the Hebrew, and the driver did not understand when she asked him a question in English, he and her boyfriend did not raise their voices and did not seem to be arguing. In retrospect, however, she felt that he intended all along to shoot them. "Why else," she asked, "did he make an excuse to get us out of the car?"

Hundreds of police were combing southern Israel last night, hunting for the killer. The police were treating the case as criminal, rather than political. According to an unconfirmed Israeli Radio report, the assailant was thought to be an Israeli Arab (Ms Gibb could not tell whether he was a Jew or an Arab). Detectives were checking whether he had fled across the border to Egypt.



Charlotte Gibb, Mr Hunter's girlfriend, who was shot in the face and hands

McMaster inquiry promises guilty will be disciplined

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

A senior Labour Party figure yesterday fuelled speculation there could be disciplinary action against one of the MPs named in a suicide note by Gordon McMaster, the Paisley South MP and former Labour whip who killed himself last month.

Jim Smith, the co-ordinator of Paisley North constituency Labour Party, said he had been assured the inquiry by Nick Brown, the Government Chief Whip, would be thorough and wide-ranging.

Mr Smith also said there would be quick and decisive action against MPs who were found to have acted "inappropriately".

Tommy Graham, named along with Lord Dixon in the suicide note by Mr McMaster, has been criticised by Scottish Labour sources for a recent interview repeating allegations against Mr McMaster that he had a drink problem.

Mr Graham, MP for Renfrew

and Inverclyde, who is expected to be interviewed by Mr Brown, is seeking to clear his name from the allegations in the suicide note that he was part of the whispering campaign against Mr McMaster, but his interview was described as "not very clever".

The pressure on the Labour Party to take disciplinary action was increased when the Scottish National Party suspended one of its councillors for allegedly spreading smear stories about Mr McMaster.

Mr Smith said on BBC radio he had been assured there would be "no cover up" following a report yesterday in *The Independent* that friends of the dead MP feared the inquiry would be a whitewash unless it delved into allegations of links in Scotland with drugs gangs and organised crime.

He said: "I have been assured there will be no cover up. Every aspect of this will be investigated fully and if there is anybody in the Labour Party guilty of inappropriate behaviour that will be dealt with most severely."

"This inquiry must be absolute. There must be no doubt left in anyone's mind that the Labour Party has looked into every aspect of this dreadful affair. I have no doubt that the Chief Whip will do this," he added.

Mr Brown cancelled his holiday to go to Scotland, but faced growing demands for the inquiry to be widened following the disclosures in *The Independent*.

Mr Brown met the parents of the dead MP, William McMaster, and his wife Allison, on Monday to discuss the suicide note. He also met Leslie Quinn, a senior official of the Scottish Labour Party.

The content, location, and outcome of Mr Brown's meeting with the parents was not disclosed.

But a source confirmed the MP's suicide note - in which he is believed to have bitterly complained of a smear campaign against him - was discussed.

"That was the main purpose of the meeting," said the source.

Welsh devolution message finds apathetic audience

Tony Heath

Marion Jenkins ripped off a grinning Tony Blair mask and proclaimed "Yes, I'm going to vote 'yes' for devolution."

Ron Davies, the Secretary of State for Wales, looked suitably impressed, as well he might, considering the reception accorded to his team of campaigners urging people in the Rhondda to vote for an elected

Welsh Assembly on 18 September.

Ms Jenkins set up her joke and costume-hire shop, "Sew easy to make believe", in Hannah Street, Porth, last year. Politicians are of some news value to her. "I've got two Tony Blairs for hire at £5 a night," she explained. William Hague? "There's no call for him round here," she said.

By taking devolution to

Labour's heartland, Mr Davies is seeking to secure a big "yes" vote in five weeks' time.

Apathy seems more of a threat in Porth, one of a string of former mining towns than the "no" campaign funded by millionaire Sir Julian Hodge from his tax haven home in Jersey. But a posse of campaigners, including Peter Hain the Welsh Office junior minister, Julie Morgan, MP for Cardiff North, and Wayne David, MEP for South Wales Central, worked the shopping crowds expertly. "We're Welsh and proud of it. It's time we had a say in our own affairs," she said.

Alan Rogers, MP for the Rhondda has reservations because proportional representation is being introduced to elect 20 of the 60 assembly members.

However his constituency Labour Party's general management committee reportedly voted down a proposal calling on members not to support the "yes" campaign by the huge margin of 68 to 2.

In 1979, Welsh voters decisively rejected devolution by 4-1. Yesterday, although the atmosphere was more pacific than revolutionary, a touch of the evangelical broke through. There was no need to preach to the converted, but there seemed to be enough "don't knows" to swing the result either way on 18 September.

DAILY POEM

Nurse's tales retold

By Tabish Khair

Because the east wind bears the semen smell of rain,
A warm smell like that of shawls worn by young women
Over a long journey of sea, plain and mountains,
The peacock spreads the Japanese fan of its tail and dances,
And dances until it catches sight of its scaled and ugly feet.

Because the koel can not raise its own chicks -
Nature's fickle mother who leaves her children on doorsteps
In the thick of nights, wrapped in controversy and storm -
Because the koel will remain eternally young, untied,
It fills the long and empty afternoons with sad and sweet songs.

Because the rare Surkhaab loves but once, marries for life,
The survivor circles the spot of its partner's death uttering cries,
Until, shot by kind hunters or emaciated by hunger and loss,
It falls to the ground, moulting feathers, searching for death.
O child, my nurse had said, may you never see a Surkhaab die.

This poem is from the latest issue of the *London Magazine* (£7.95), edited by Alan Ross. Celebrating 50 years of Indian independence, it embraces new fiction, verse, essays, memoirs, photographs and reviews. Subscriptions to the *London Magazine* cost £28.50 per year from 30 Thurloe Place, London SW7.

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Blair's babes nudge for places at the top table

Bright, ambitious, youthful, Labour's high-flyers are busy sorting out the future

Kathy Marks

The next generation of Labour high-flyers is already in place, occupying influential positions at the heart of government. These are the fledgling politicians who helped to engineer Labour's election victory and now occupy desks in key Whitehall offices. They are the aides, thinkers and special advisers who play a central role in the formation of policy and have daily access to Tony Blair and his ministers. They are bright, ambitious and above all youthful. Die-hard Blairite modernisers without exception, they are a close-knit network of people who work, socialise and, in some cases, live together. They met through school, university or youth politics and introduced one another to their political patrons.

A cluster of these rising stars work in the No 10 Policy Unit, the powerhouse of New Labour ideas, including the policy director, David Miliband, 32, a former academic with a fearsome intellect tipped as a future Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Treasury is another breeding ground. One of the senior advisers to the Chancellor Gordon Brown is Ed Miliband, 30, brother of David. His chief strategist is Ed Balls, 29, a former *Financial Times* leader writer who is engaged to Yvonne Cooper, Labour MP for Rugeley and Castleford.

Some members of the inner circle are found in ministers' private offices - Liz Kendall, for instance, a 26-year-old who guides Harriet Harman around the intricacies of the social security system. Others, more on the periphery, work for think-tanks, lobbying firms and private political consultancies.

The links between them are many and complex. Ed Miliband is the long-standing boyfriend of Liz Lloyd, 26, a home affairs adviser in the Policy Unit. Ms Lloyd went to school in Guildford with James Purnell, 27, who also works in the unit, and with Tim Allan, 27, Alastair Campbell's deputy in the Downing Street press office.

Mr Allan and Mr Purnell share a house in Tony Blair's Islington heartland, together with Gail Nuttley. Mr Purnell's girlfriend, who used to work for BMP, Labour's advertising agency. On Sunday mornings they kick a football around Highbury Fields with others such as Peter Hyman, of the Policy Unit, and Ian Corfield, research director of the Fabian Society.

Another keen footballer is Benjamin Wegg-Prosser, a disconcertingly self-possessed 23-year-old who is Peter Mandelson's chief aide. Derek Draper, 29, used to do the same job. Mr Draper, whose book on the first 100 days of the Blair government will be published next month, is now with Prima Europe, a political consultancy.

Despite their loyalty to Blair, not all of them live in Islington.

Cosy relationships on the route to power



The Miliband brothers occupy separate flats within a handsome house in Primrose Hill. Mr Draper lives two doors away from Ms Lloyd in Kennington.

Most of these bright young things - metropolitan, cosmopolitan and media streetwise - have degrees from Oxbridge

or redbrick universities. Several had stints at the BBC. Mr Purnell was John Birt's policy adviser, and has also worked for Islington Council, a training ground for young Blairites.

Members of the group insist that it is not a closed set. But certainly, it has its uses. Mr Purnell, who worked as an adviser to Mr Blair after university, recommended Mr Allan for his job when he left in 1992. When the latter quit for the BBC in 1994, Ms Lloyd took over.

"They're suspicious of people who they think are not on the side of the party," one political journalist said. "That can make them seem rather reticent and cool." Mr Draper said:

"It's a very strong network, no doubt about it. But it's an open, meritocratic clique. The reason that we all get on, to be arrogant about it, is that we're all very clever."

Confidence they do not lack, nor talent, nor ambition. David Miliband and Mr Purnell, together with the lobbyists Ben Lucas and Neal Lawson, all want to be MPs. Ed Balls is surely destined for high office. But with power so centralised in the Government, they already wield enormous influence.

Outside work, members of the circle meet up at dinner parties and restaurants. Several are members of the Groucho Club, the media haunt, and the Soho

House Club. Mr Draper and Mr Allan are drinking partners who go out "on the pull" together.

While Mr Draper is a notorious party animal, some of the others are more retiring. Mr Corfield says he has never seen either of the Miliband brothers drunk. What unites them politically is their pragmatism, having watched the Labour Party tear itself apart in opposition. Despite their jobs, they claim not to have an exaggerated idea of their own importance. "We're there to assist elected politicians," one special adviser said. "We're not players. Once you see yourself as a player, you're dead."

Donald MacIntyre interviews Peter Mandelson, page 14

Ethical face of new breed of lobbyists

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Three former advisers to Tony Blair have formed an agency operating out of smart new offices in Soho to promote "ethical" lobbying.

Following the "cash for questions" scandal, they are developing an "ethical" approach to their business. They will not take on clients "whose behaviour or goals we find politically or morally indefensible".

Neal Lawson, 34, Ben Lucas, 35, and John Mendelsohn, 30, were advisers to Tony Blair during the general election campaign in Labour's Millbank media headquarters.

Mr Lucas, a former adviser to Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said they would not take on business from tobacco companies, and would not have ac-

cepted a brief to oppose the ban on handguns.

All former political advisers to Labour spokesmen in Opposition, they worked for Lowe Bell, the public affairs firm run by Sir Tim Bell, until after the election when they left to form their own company.

One of their clients is the RSPCA, and they are advising on the strategy for supporters of the Labour backbench Bill by Michael Foster to ban hunting.

They are part of the new breed of lobbyists being hired by all the political communications lobbying companies in the scramble to catch up with the Labour landslide on 1 May, which has made ex-Labour advisers hot property.

"We think we have struck a chord with a lot of people," Mr Lucas said. "We have only been going for six weeks but there has

been a growing sense that the way in which organisations relate to the government and to the political process needed to change.

"A certain type of lobbying has been dying out for quite a long time - the idea that all you have to do is take an MP or minister to lunch, introduce them to your client, convince them of the argument, and show them a constituency interest."

"The election of a Labour Government symbolised, far more directly, the way that government deals with outside organisations and it has to be far more above board."

"In our case, it is not who we know, but understanding the way that people work that matters."

All three are Labour Party members and committed Blairite modernisers.



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Olde English images ousted by cool Britannia

Michael Streeter and Kelly Pemble

Great Britain plc is to be given a new, trendier marketing image in an attempt to attract more visitors to the country.

The influence of cultural champions such as rock band Oasis and the current theme of Cool Britannia will help create the new national logo, edging out the old "roast beef and royalty" view of the country.

However the British Tourist Authority yesterday denied reports that it is dropping the Union flag from its brand image altogether.

The marquee, which will feature on the BTA's literature and brochures, will be unveiled next month after extensive testing of the new design with 21 focus groups. The £50,000 project is seen as important to the development of an industry which is already worth £40bn a year to the economy.

Mr David Quarumby, chairman of the BTA, said: "Our research into visitors' perceptions about Britain has shown how much they appreciate the unique contrasts of the traditional and the innovative, our history and heritage but also our contemporary achievements in fashion, style and design."

"The brief for our designers was to capture these contrasts in one marquee with which we can promote Britain abroad as a tourism destination."

The current logo features the BTA's initials alongside a Union flag. The London agency designing the new logo, Real Times Studio, yesterday said that it had not been specifically asked to keep the flag. "We were given a core booklet, which contained all the elements the BTA wanted looked at, and the Union Jack was not in it," said Annie Eaves, its development director.

Yesterday *The Independent* asked other creative agencies - at short notice - to come up with their own serious and humorous

ideas for a new badge of Britain. John Spencer, creative partner of Spencer Landor, favoured a design reflecting "cool authority", and said the flag ideally should be retained but used differently. "The image needs to be very professional, a bit like the perception of new Labour."

Other countries, even if they do not use the national flag, normally reflect their colours in their logos. The French have flashes of blue, white and red on their marquee, in a "deliberate attempt" to keep the French flag as an identity, said Gillian Green, head of press for the French tourist office.

Spain's tourist logo depicts part of a painting by the Spanish artist Miro, but retains the country's colours of yellow and red. The Dutch tourist office does not display national colours - but uses a tulip instead.

Ireland's tourism office recently dropped plans to replace the shamrock with a new logo depicting two people with their arms outstretched in welcome. Critics condemned it as looking like sumo wrestlers preparing for battle. Australia uses sun, sea and kangaroos in their marquee, but not the flag. Poland last year ditched its red, white and black logo, based on their national flag, and now use the word Polska with a graphic depicting the country's landscape.

What one insider described as the "freshening up" of Britain's overseas image was announced as another traditional British image came under threat - the footguards' bearskin. The Ministry of Defence announced yesterday it is carrying out another review of how to replace the need for real bears to make the headwear.

Lord Gilbert, the defence procurement minister, a noted animal lover whose wife Jean is a member of the fund-raising committee of the Worldwide Fund for Nature, is said to be concerned at the continuing use of the Canadian black bear.



Ins and outs: An image suggested by advertising agency Spencer Landor to promote Britain on the day a traditional image - the guardsman's bearskin - came under threat

However, though other animal-skin headwear, made out of beaver and seal, has been abandoned in favour of synthetic materials, the Army has faced

difficulties in finding suitable alternatives to the longer-haired bearskins. An MOD spokesman said: "In previous experiments, the hats

became rather bedraggled - like a bad hair day." The spokesman said they would rather use longer lasting synthetic materials but added that the skins come from

bears already culled by the Canadian government, and not from an endangered species. "A lot of them are knocked down on roads in places like Ontario any-

way," he added. The bearskin was first worn as an honour by the Foot Guards for their defeat of the French Imperial Guard, which wore bearskins, at Water-

loo. About 2,000 bearskins are worn, and 150 replacements are needed each year - coming from about 50 animals.

Leading article, page 13



Two suspended in abuse inquiry

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

Two men working in local-authority children's homes have been suspended after allegations of abuse dating back to the 1960s, police said yesterday.

Northumbria police are trying to locate hundreds of former residents of council homes between the 1960s and 1980s who may have been affected. Allegations about other workers have also emerged during inquiries by police but they are dead or retired and no longer working with children.

One of the men suspended is employed by Newcastle City Council and the other by Northumberland County Council, but they have also worked

for other authorities. The investigation began after a 1970s resident of a Newcastle council home made allegations of abuse; subsequent inquiries resulted in more complaints being made. The inquiries are believed to span several local authority areas.

Police will be working closely with child-protection agencies, social services and health as part of the inquiry team.

The allegations involve not only sexual but also serious physical abuse and the investigation is likely to be "lengthy but it is not known how wide-ranging it may prove to be", a police spokeswoman said.

Police have set up an incident room number 0161 868680 for anyone who has information.

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8 independence 50 years on

The legacy of midnight, marked

From Glasgow to Batley, Asians dance to a diverse cultural beat

by Margaret Rogerson

As the Scottish Association of Indian organisations prepares to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Indian independence in Edinburgh tomorrow, there may be some debate over the order in which the national anthems should be played. There is, after all, a choice of three: the Indian national anthem, the British national anthem and, of course, "Flower of Scotland".

The celebrations in this country represent a lot more than simply marking the anniversary of Indian independence. Not only is it a confirmation of the importance of Indian culture and a tribute to the Indians, both Muslim and Hindu, who fought bravely for independence; it is also a special time in which Indian people in this country can celebrate their dual identity.

As Mohinder Chatrik, director of the Indian Workers Association of West Yorkshire points out: "As India celebrates its independence, congratulations should also go to the people of Indian origin who have successfully forged a new life in Great Britain but have not forgotten the mother country."

The memory of independence is to some extent overshadowed by the horrors of Partition that followed. There is undoubtedly a bond between British and Indian cultures, and in many cases the British Asian community would find it difficult to define themselves as belonging to one or the other — especially the younger generation, who have often never even travelled to India.

But there is still a wish expressed by some British Asians for the British to take more responsibility for the colonial past. The massacres that occurred during Partition have been blamed on the lack of planning that went into dividing the country and the British government's desire to make a quick exit.

As Sewa Singh Kohli, secretary of the Association of Indian Organisations in Glasgow points out: "There was no preparation made for the gap of administration that was covered by the most unusual act in our history. Even when the British people decided to change over to the decimal system, lots of preparation went into it to help make the transition easier for people."

But when Britain decided to leave India and millions of people

had to change countries, no extra people were drafted in to help sort it out. There were no plans, no thought and no discussion."

Indeed, there was a great deal of confusion leading up to Indian independence; people at the time seemed unsure about what Partition would actually mean. Hafeez Hassan Daji from Batley in West Yorkshire recalls for a *Awaz*, a local newspaper, his first impressions of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's first post-independence leader. He heard



Flag day: Bradford children prepare to celebrate Pakistan's independence. Photograph: Nigel Hillier

They want Britain to accept more responsibility for the colonial past

him speak in Alipur in Gujarat in 1938, when Jinnah was beginning to promote the idea of a separate state.

"He spoke to us in Urdu and explained that the Muslim League wanted a separate state for Muslims, that would later be Pakistan. We didn't really know what he was talking about. We imagined it to be a place just for Muslims but in India. We certainly didn't realise that it would be another country."

People who lived in India at the time of Partition remembered it with great sadness. A Sikh woman now living in Batley told *Awaz* that independence made no sense then. "Before 1947 everyone lived like brothers and sisters. After independence the village was in turmoil. It was like losing a family and close friends as people moved away. I found it very difficult."

"I liked India the way it was. But during those months around Partition, it was terrible. At night we couldn't sleep peacefully. We knew we might have to get up and go at a moment's notice. We were very scared... if we went to sleep we didn't know if we'd wake up."

Although the victory of independence was stained by the horrors that accompanied Partition, the celebrations in this country and India itself hark back to an Indian culture that was known for its diverse and pluralistic communities.

In Edinburgh, tomorrow morning's festivities will start off with a prayer meeting as practised by Gandhi himself. The meeting will represent all the main religious groups in India: Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian. It will also reflect the different cultures of today.

In the evening, as the Scottish Asian community in Edinburgh will be attending a public party in Princes Street, their London counterparts will get ready to start funk at the Soho Spice restaurant, where free beer will be on offer. The music played will be a mixture of Indian sounds from the Fifties to the present day. The performance will feature several tracks by Apache Indian, a rap artist who uses American influences alongside traditional Indian bhangra music.

Apache Indian's music represents both Eastern and Western cultures, which goes some way in explaining his popularity in Britain, where the British Asian identity is so richly embroidered.

In the words of Tara Mukherjee, head of the confederation of Indian Organisations: "In spite of everything, independence cemented the bond of friendship between these two countries and it is now stronger than ever. Today English has become an Indian language." Enriched, of course, by the soft cadence of many regional British vowel sounds.



Polished off: A worker puts the finishing touches to cleaning a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi yesterday, in preparation for the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of independence from Britain tomorrow. Photograph: Andrew Buurman

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independence 50 years on

in Britain, Pakistan and India

Border party may soothe the wounds of partition

Peter Popham
in Delhi

If the authorities permit it to go ahead, the most pregnant image to come out of India's celebration of 50 years of freedom could be an unprecedented demonstration of Indo-Pakistani brotherhood on the border between the two perennially warring countries.

For the second year running, an organisation called Citizens for Democracy plans to bus large numbers of fraternally-inclined Indians - the organisers predict about 2,500 people will turn up - to Wagah, some eight hours from Delhi, the only land crossing to Pakistan. Organisers on the Pakistan side, it is planned, will be doing the same thing. (Last year, due to a mix-up, no Pakistanis showed up.)

Stages will be constructed a few dozen metres from the crossing point, and participants from both sides will enjoy a programme of classical music and dance. Around midnight, if the guards allow it, a small contingent will be permitted to cross over and embrace those on the other side. It will be a symbolic way to assuage the wounds of Partition.

Meanwhile the commemoration in the capital will follow a more traditional course. Delhi is filling up with the impediment of a major public event: barriers, floodlights, marquees, chairs. But it is symptomatic of the apparently desperate haste with which the celebration has been organised that as recently as last week the event organiser which won the tender to stage the main show was bickering publicly with the sponsors, Delhi City Government, over the payment schedule, and declaring that unless it received more money up front it would be unable to import the required high-tech equipment from the UK.



Artistic freedom: Dancing girls listen to an elderly freedom fighter at a ceremony in Delhi to honour the heroes of the independence struggle

Photograph: Andrew Burman

Once the final wrinkles have been ironed out, however, Delhi should enjoy a grandstand seat at a celebration which will combine elements of the familiar, the spectacular and the emotional.

It will kick off at 9pm today with a "March of the Nation" along the main axis of Lutyens's New Delhi, from Nehru Stadium in the east to the park at the threshold of the Presidential Palace in the west, a distance of nearly two miles. Delhi City Government's Accounts Department allowing, the march will culminate in a spectacular show for an audience of some 7,000 (plus several hundred million more on television), with music and dance, fireworks and a laser show.

Shortly before midnight, the action shifts to the Central Hall of Parliament for the grave, profoundly traditional portion of the celebration where, in the presence of parliamentarians, ambassadors and the chief guest of honour, Betty Boothroyd, the Speaker of the House of Commons, a recording of Nehru's famous "Freedom at Midnight" speech will be played.

"Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge," those rarefied Harrovian vowels will enunciate once more.

"...At the stroke of midnight, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom..."

It was originally intended that Ms Boothroyd would speak during the ceremony, but the idea was scrapped after an MP of the Hindu nationalist BJP denounced it as "preposterously idiotic" to have a Briton speaking on what was "a quintessentially Indian night".

The following morning's main event is also comfortably familiar: at the Red Fort, the grandest monument of pre-Lutyens Delhi, the Indian white, green and beige tricolour will be hoisted and the prime minister, Mr I K Gujral, will make a

speech. Later tomorrow, at 3.30pm, yet another traditional anniversary item is scheduled. Richard Attenborough's pious *Gandhi* will be screened once more, this year preceded by an hour-long documentary on the making of the film.

Earlier in the day, however, Gandhi's name will be invoked with a different resonance when 150 slum children gather at the Gandhi Memorial in central Delhi, holding placards berating the government for failing to make good the promises of the freedom fighters of 50 years ago; to eliminate illiteracy, poverty and child labour.

'Bandit Queen' threatens self-immolation

Phoolan Devi, the low caste "bandit queen" in the film of that name who last year became an MP, is threatening to disrupt India's Independence Day celebrations by setting herself on fire at the Parliament House. Ms Devi is upset because a political enemy has decided to revive 55 cases pending against her, including charges of mass murder, which could bring to an end her new and comfortable life as a politician.

With her fine sense of theatre, Ms Devi has now seized the initiative with her threat to end it all. "Forgive me or kill me", she told a press conference in Delhi, "but do not humiliate me like this." It is thought unlikely that Ms Devi will carry out her threat. But if she were to succeed in getting arrested in Delhi, it would keep her out of the grasp of the and give her a breathing space. Her bandit cunning has deserted her.



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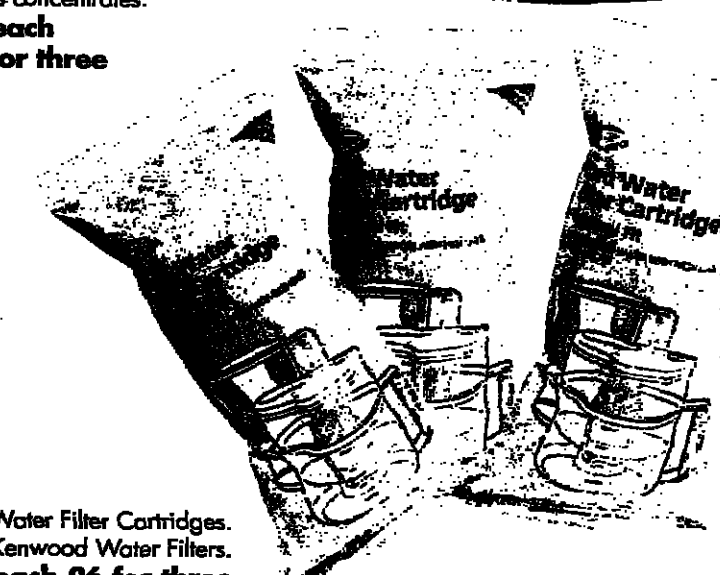
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international

Child beauty queen may have been murdered in sado-masochist ritual

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

A child murder case that has gripped America for eight months took a new turn yesterday with belated publication of the post-mortem report.

Published in the face of police objections, it established that JonBenét Ramsey, a six-year-old beauty queen from Boulder, Colorado, had been strangled, but also supplied evidence suggesting she may have been the victim of a sado-masochistic ritual.

Although it was rumoured that JonBenét had been strangled, the report supplied a wealth of detail pointing to bondage: it said she was found on her back, with a cord round her neck that was attached to a piece of wood.

There was another cord around her chest and she was wearing a long white sequined robe. She wore a bracelet inscribed with her name and the date of Christmas Day, 1996 - the day before her body was found - and had a small red heart inscribed on the palm of her left hand in red ink. Her skull had been fractured and she may have been sexually assaulted.



John and Patsy Ramsey, who deny killing their daughter and claim an aggrieved ex-employee had a motive

JonBenét was reported missing on Boxing Day after her mother, Patsy, found a note demanding \$118,000 ransom. That evening her father, John, reported the discovery of her body in a basement room of the family home. While popular suspicion fell on one or other parent, no one has been arrested and no suspects named.

The case gripped America, partly because of JonBenét's celebrity, partly because her mother is an ex-beauty queen, partly because of the family's wealth and partly because the crime happened at Christmas.

The murder also opened up the world of child beauty pageants to unfattering scrutiny. The post-mortem report was published as the result of a judge's order.

The police said details in the report could tip off the killer about lines of inquiry but journalists following the case noted that some details remained either unknown or undisclosed.

There was no estimated time of death - a crucial detail, in relation to the ransom note and in view of the fact that there was deep snow on the ground at the time and no footprints were

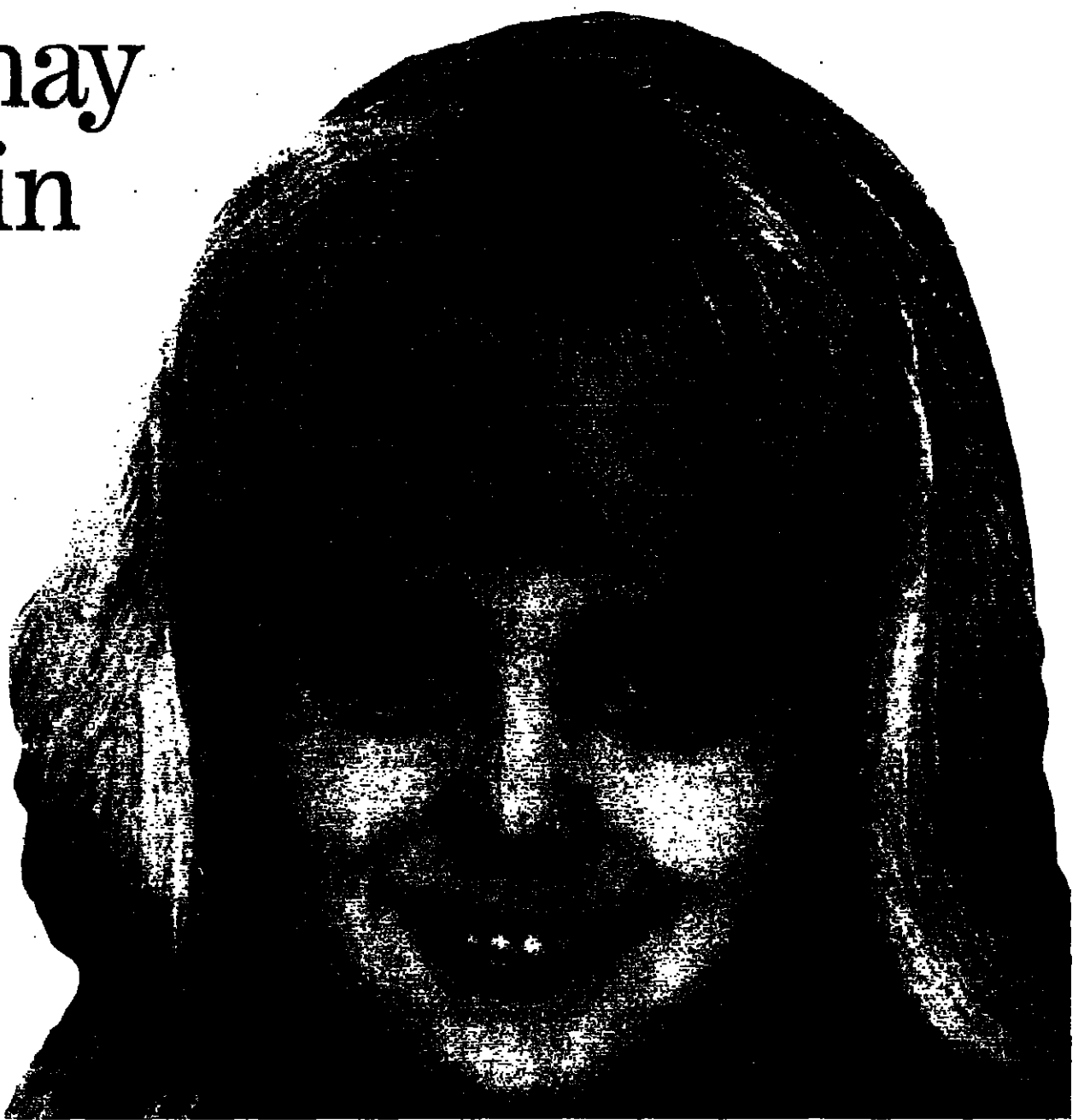
found around the house. The question of whether JonBenét was sexually assaulted was also left open, although early reports - later retracted - said she was.

The police have been criticised not only for failing to find the killer but for their handling of the case, starting with what is described as the cardinal error of not searching or sealing off as soon as the presumed kidnapping was reported.

The Ramseys, who have retained separate lawyers and insist they are innocent, have put it about that an aggrieved former employee of Mr Ramsey might have had a motive for the killing, and cite the specific sum in the ransom demand.

They have also taken out newspaper advertisements offering a reward for information that could lead to their daughter's killer.

The police have taken repeated handwriting samples from Mrs Ramsey and have also taken DNA samples from Mr Ramsey. The results, in both cases, are said to have been inconclusive. The only other person thought to be in the family house at the time, JonBenét's brother Burke, aged nine, was ruled out of the inquiry at an early stage.



Victim: JonBenét Ramsey, found with a cord around her neck, according to the delayed post-mortem report

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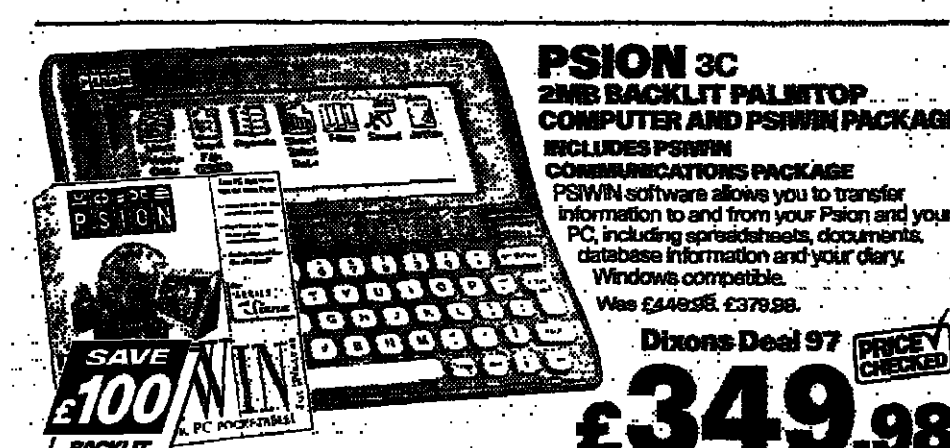
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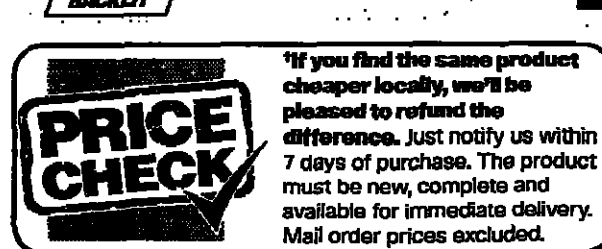
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Peace talks deadlock

Eric Silver
Jerusalem

President Bill Clinton's Middle East troubleshooter, Dennis Ross, held separate, last-minute talks last night with the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat, before flying back to Washington.

He had little to show for his four-day mission to revive the peace negotiations, beyond the establishment of a joint panel of Israeli and Palestinian security chiefs, with officials of the CIA sitting in.

That may, however, be enough for the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, to launch a personal rescue initiative as promised at the end of this month.

A jaundiced Israeli official said last night that Mr Ross had only created a framework. "It

has to be judged by content and results," he insisted. "Up to now, we haven't seen any concrete steps of the kind we think are vital if there is to be real co-operation against terrorism."

A summit meeting between Mr Netanyahu and King Hussein of Jordan earlier yesterday in the Jordanian Red Sea port of Aqaba was equally unproductive.

The Israeli leader rejected a Jordanian call to ease restrictions on 2 million West Bank and Gaza Palestinians, imposed after the 30 July suicide bombing in a Jerusalem market, which killed 14 Israeli civilians. He said Israel had intelligence information that further attacks were being planned.

Mr Netanyahu also declined to hand over tax revenues, collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, now estimated to be running at about

\$135m. Mr Arafat has had to raise bank loans to pay police and civil service salaries.

In another flexing of muscles, Israeli bulldozers have this week demolished 10 Palestinian homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, alleged to have been built without permits. Mr Netanyahu reiterated his claim that Israel was not punishing the Palestinian population.

The nearest to an Israeli concession in Aqaba was the Prime Minister's most explicit pledge so far to lift sanctions step-by-step with evidence that the Palestinian Authority was keeping its word and fighting the men of violence.

King Hussein put a brave face on the continuing stalemate, saying he hoped it was a turning point towards achieving a just peace. His listeners could only pray he knew something they didn't.

Crowds cheer 'vampire' hanging

Tehran (Reuters) - An Iranian serial killer dubbed "Tehran Vampire" was hanged from a mobile crane in Tehran yesterday as a crowd of about 20,000 people looked on.

The crowd gathered at dawn at the Olympic Village district in west Tehran to see 28-year-old Gholamreza Khoshrou Kouran Kordieh lashed by his victims' male relatives before his public execution. Khoshrou was condemned to death after confessing on television to the kidnapping, rape and murder of nine girls and women aged 10 to 47 in four months this year.

Khoshrou carried out his crimes by night, posing as a freelance taxi driver, thus earning himself the title of the Tehran vampire.

"Innocent blood will always be avenged," a robed cleric told the crowd before the sentence was carried out.

Verses from the Koran, were relayed through loudspeakers to onlookers who had fought through two-mile traffic jams to get to the scene.

The crowd, kept away from the crane by a line of police, surged to the wall when Khoshrou was brought in front of them with his hands tied.

Officials threw Khoshrou down on his stomach where he was then given 214 lashes by male relatives of the victims. Members of the crowd counted out the number of lashes and cheered the relatives. Khoshrou was then led to the crane where a rope was placed around his neck before being slowly winched off the ground.

"He deserves worse," said Maryam Bakhti, a 29-year-old graduate, who said she got into Khoshrou's car one evening in 1994 and had to fight her way out of the car after he drove down a dark side street.

significant shorts

Crash relatives stage sit-in at Guam airport

Relatives of victims of last week's Korean Air crash staged a sit-in at Guam airport, angered by problems returning the remains to South Korea. About 50 protesters, sitting in front of the Korean Air counter, complained that the recovery of the remains from the crash site was taking too long. The disaster killed 226 people and dozens of bodies and body parts are still in the wreckage.
AP - Agaña

\$1bn bid for tank monopoly

General Dynamics bid \$1bn (£625m) for the military-vehicle producer United Defence LP, an acquisition that would face a major monopoly decision by the Clinton administration, because if General Dynamics succeeded it would become the sole US maker of tanks.
Reuters - New York

Chinese get the mobile habit

Forecasts for the booming Chinese mobile-phone market say the country should have more than 30 million users by 2000. Growing by an average of 160 per cent a year, the Chinese market is the third largest in the world, after the United States and Japan.
AP - Peking

Limp French excuse

The French sex drive is waning and more half of those queried for a survey on their private lives say they can put up with long periods of chastity. A survey for *L'Evenement du Jeudi* showed 38 per cent of those polled were making love less than they used to and 42 per cent said their sex lives were unchanged. As for chastity, 52 per cent said they would not be bothered by a long period without making love.
Reuters - Paris

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inside north korea

The Great Leader rules from beyond the grave

North Korea has not had a head of state or, more importantly, a leader of the ruling Korean Worker's Party for more than three years. From a Korean point of view, though, both these posts are filled, aside from the small technicality that their incumbent is deceased.

Kim Il Sung, the "Great Leader", died in July 1994, having led his country for almost half a century. He left a chasm which the North Korean leadership is wary of filling. "The President will live for ever, therefore the President's seat will always be empty," explained an official guide in front of a giant bronze statue of the late leader depicted with his hand outstretched to the people.

The late leader lives on in many ways. Every adult citizen wears a badge carrying his portrait. It is almost impossible to walk more than five minutes in any city without meeting a Kim Il Sung statue, hoarding, or a building named in his honour. This is a personality cult which dwarfs the cults of Stalin and Chairman Mao.

The cult is overwhelming and bizarre. At its apex stands the International Friendship Exhibition, located in the middle of the country at Mount Myohyang, one of Korea's most beautiful areas. Built in a traditional style (unlike most buildings which resemble the worst

Bronze statue of Kim Il Sung

excesses of early Soviet brutalism), it is a gargantuan shrine to the Great Leader and to his son the Dear Leader. The twist to the shrine's story is that it is stuffed with "61,000 valuable presents", given to the two leaders by people from all over the world. A "spontaneous" poem by Kim Il Sung puts it this way: "The country ruined by cringing and subjected to so much suffering, is now thronged by goodwill missions from all lands." The re-

Stephen Vines in Pyongyang

ality is that North Korea is probably the most diplomatically isolated nation on earth. The only missions "thronging" its doors are of aid donors trying to alleviate the economic disaster resulting from President Kim's rule. Reality is not allowed inside this sacred place, where shoes must be discarded and bowing before images of the Great Leader is not voluntary. Most of the population has been shepherded around the exhibition. It exists, it is claimed, as proof of the international popularity of the two Kims and it locates North Korea at the epicentre of world affairs.

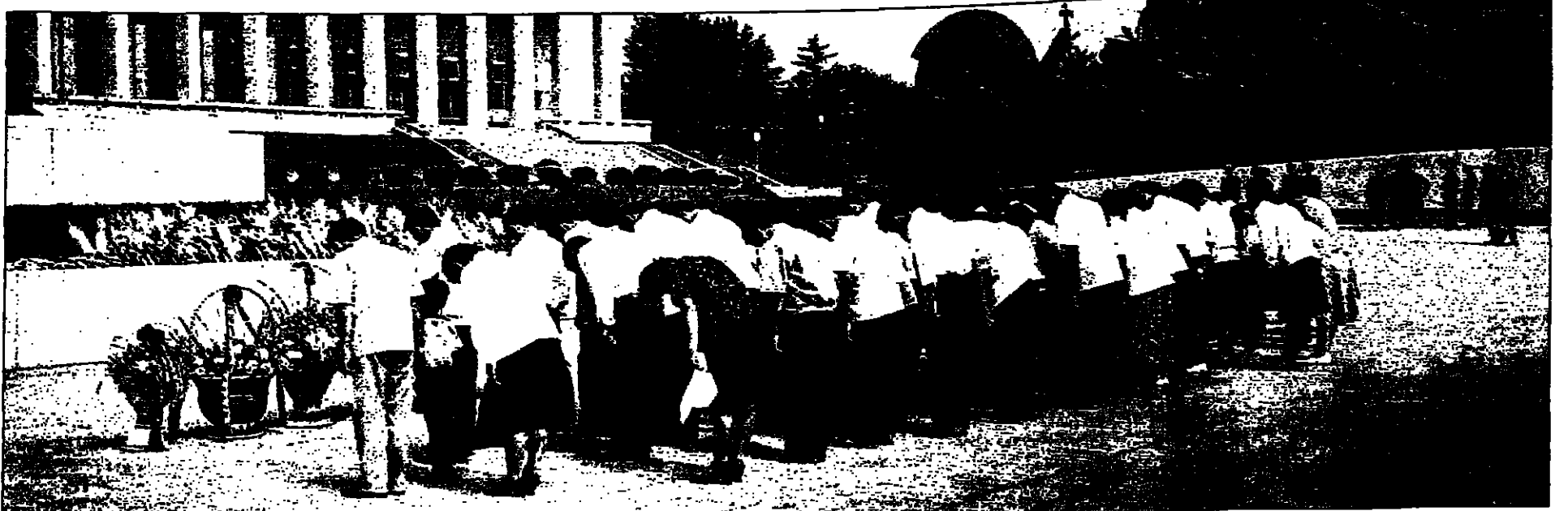
Like every other successful Asian Communist leader, Kim Il Sung paid more attention to nationalism than to the internationalist ideas of Karl Marx.

President Kim's notched theory, dignified in North Korea as the

"Juche Idea", revolves essentially around the notion of self-reliance. Basically it says that Koreans can do anything they set their minds to. Then, remembering that Socialist internationalism ought to come into this, the Juche Idea generously suggests that the same principles apply to other peoples too.

Bookselves in North Korea are crammed with variations of turgidly written nonsense on this. To an outsider these seem gibberish, but they are studied with reverence by Koreans.

"Frankly speaking, 95 per cent of the people regard Kim Il Sung as their father," said the guide. It was not made clear what fate would befall the 5 per cent who had other views. However, it is becoming increasing-



Cult figure: North Koreans bowing before a memorial to Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang. The president died three years ago, but still dominates North Korea. Photographs: Stephen Vines

with *Newsweek* that the son will be formally inaugurated as president in October according to invitations that Russia has received. However, Kim Jong Il is but a shadow of his father. Brian Bridges, an expert on North Korea from Hong Kong's Lingnan University, describes him as a "dimwit". "He just doesn't have the intellect to run it all",

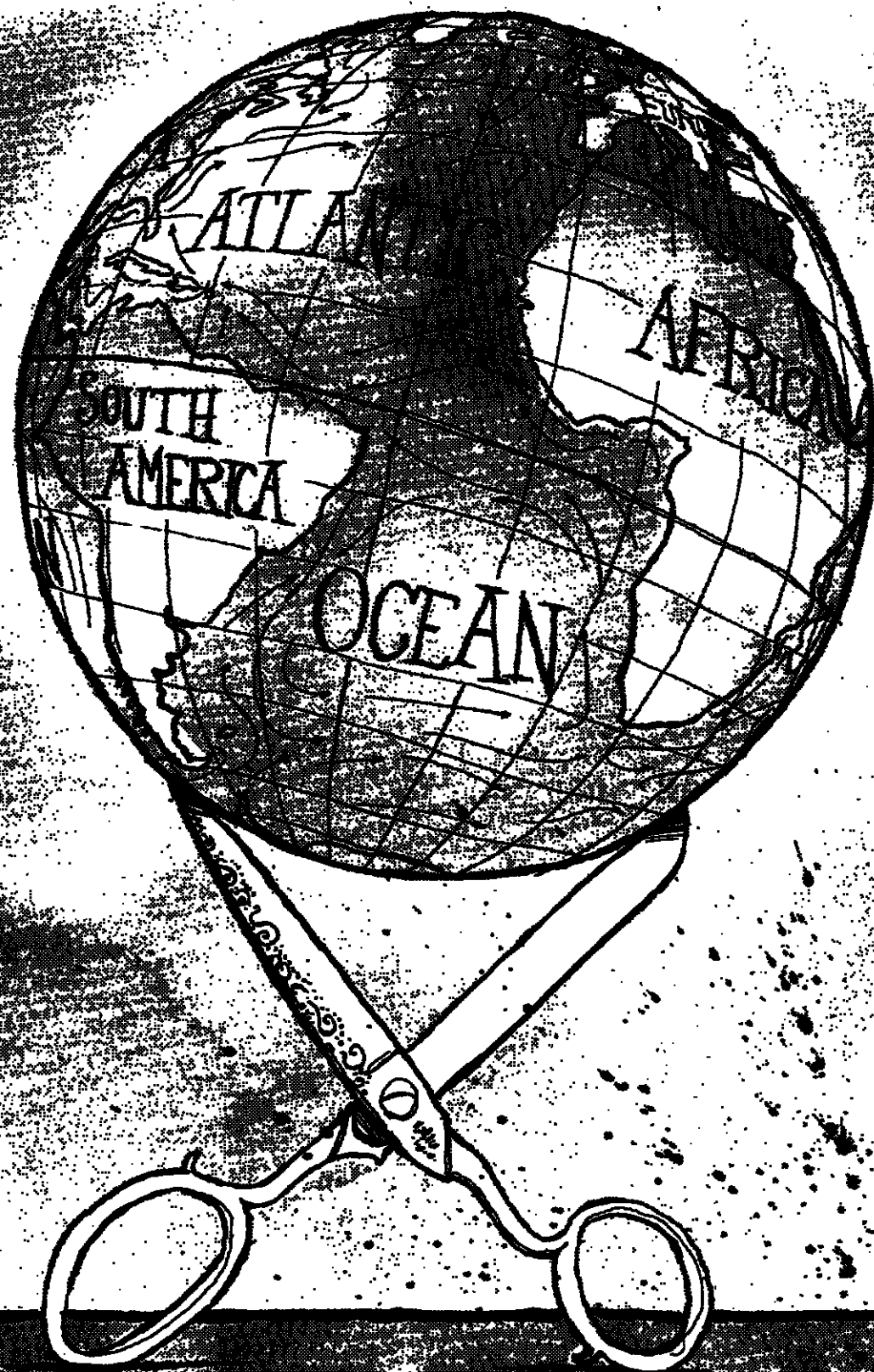
Kim Jong Il's late father erected a one-party state with Soviet assistance after the Second World War. Early days were dominated by the ruthless elimination of all opposition, and there is still no real dissent now. But Dr Bridges believes that the leadership cannot stay unchallenged for much longer. "The crunch must come in the

first half of 1998", he predicts. By then the food crisis will be out of control and, he believes, a part of the elite will break away and say "we really have to do something drastic". Foreign officials in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, are less sure that anything will happen so soon, though they accept the crunch will come and that the

last unblinking Stalinist regime will have to change in the end. "What you see right now is the unravelling of a system which must have been fairly good 20 years ago," one said. Nevertheless, he argues, "they can continue for a very long time. Believe me, these people still have trust in the leadership, their tolerance level is so high".

Kim Il Sung's megalomania and ego have survived his passing. As winter comes in a couple of months time and the limited food supplies dwindle even further, the shivering people living out the Juche Idea might start to wonder just how well self-reliance is working. ■ This is the second article in a three-part series.

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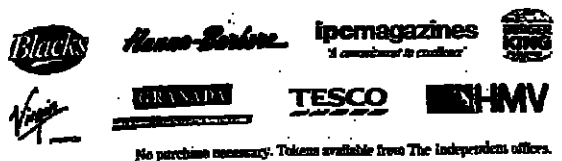
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obituaries / gazette

Lance Barnard

Lance Barnard shook Australia during one of the most exciting periods in Australian politics, the fortnight in 1972 known as the "two-man government". His partner in this episode was Gough Whitlam, who led the Australian Labor Party to power in November that year after 23 years in the electoral wilderness. Barnard was Whitlam's deputy leader, and the two men set about reforming public life at a pace that has never been equalled before or since.

Without waiting for the customary two weeks that it would normally take the newly-elected Labor MPs to gather and elect a front bench, as the rules then decreed, Whitlam and Barnard divided between themselves the entire spread of ministerial portfolios and fired off a volley of executive decisions that left Australians gobsmacked.

The outgoing conservative



Barnard: toll to Whitlam
Photograph: Camera Press

Liberal-National coalition had been in power since 1949. It was tired, plagued by dull leadership and out of touch with a new generation of baby-boomer voters. For Labor supporters, the atmosphere was not unlike that of Britain in 1977, when the torpor of a sclerotic administration

was swept away and the excitement of a new political era unfolded.

The Whitlam-Barnard duumvirate became an earthquake under Australia's stolidly conservative political landscape. Whitlam held 13 ministries, Barnard 14, including defence, the portfolio that he retained when normality was restored after the full ministry was sworn in.

The duo's first act was to abolish conscription to the armed forces, which the conservatives had introduced eight years earlier to bolster Australia's controversial commitment of troops to the Vietnam war. Then they released draft dodgers from prison and announced that Australia's remaining soldiers in Vietnam would be brought home. The youth of Australia applauded.

Next, the two-man government abolished British imper-

ial honours down under and replaced them with an Australian honours system. They announced that Australia would recognise the People's Republic of China, thawing a Cold War diplomatic freeze, banned the granting of mining leases on Aboriginal reserves, refused entry of racially selected sporting teams to Australia and started moves to grant independence to Papua New Guinea, Australia's northern neighbour.

Gordon Biley, then an Australian representative at the United Nations, and later a Labor minister, captured the excitement of those times when he said: "By the time the duumvirate had been operating for a week, all I wanted was to get back to Australia as soon as I could. There were things like me, accustomed to cringing culturally when, as an Australian abroad, one was either thought of as an Austrian or as

a variety of South African, but who quickly found reason to take pride in what the new government was doing."

With a typical flourish, Whitlam described his interregnum with Barnard as "the smallest ministry with jurisdiction over Australia since a temporary British administration under the Duke of Wellington in 1844". Barnard himself was more down-to-earth. "It was the most interesting period of my life," he said. "This had never occurred before in the history of Australia. The public were, I think, pleased something was being done. We were sworn in on the Monday, on the Tuesday conscription had ended and I had arranged for national service personnel to leave the camps as they wanted to."

The remarks say much about the differences between these two unlikely partners. Whitlam was a "new Labor" man, a

lawyer who prided himself on his erudition and who found few close friends among his team. Barnard was a traditional Labor man, a teacher from Tasmania with no pretensions to match his leader's intellectual reach but whose practicality and unforgiving loyalty Whitlam treasured.

Whitlam, now 81, praised Barnard fulsomely on his death. According to Ross McMullin, author of *The Light on the Hill*, a history of the Australian Labor Party, Barnard was one of the few friends that Whitlam made among federal Labor MPs. "Barnard's most important attribute was being a foil to Whitlam, something that helped to keep Gough on the rails."

Barnard was born into a political family in Launceston, Tasmania, and educated at Launceston Technical School. His father held the local federal seat of Bass for 15 years, dur-

ing which he was a minister in the post-war Labor government headed by Ben Chifley. Lance Barnard served with the Australian army in the Middle East during the Second World War. The battle of El Alamein, where he was an artillery officer, left him with permanent hearing damage.

Barnard himself won his father's old seat at the 1954 general election and held it for 21 years. In 1974, he was unseated as deputy prime minister by Jim Cairns, a scion of the Left. The following year, Barnard told Whitlam he wanted to retire from politics. Whitlam appointed him Australia's ambassador to Sweden, Finland and Norway.

By then, Whitlam's government was under siege from a series of political and economic scandals. Barnard's departure brought a by-election for Bass in 1975, which was a landslide

against Labor. It presaged the decimation of Labor at the general election later that year after its controversial dismissal by Sir John Kerr, the Governor-General.

Whitlam's government lasted only three years, but it was a watershed in changing Australia's image, particularly in social and foreign policy. Barnard played an important part in bringing those changes to fruition. In his own unostentatious way, he later claimed that looking after his constituents down home in Tasmania was his most lasting achievement. "I never forgot their interests at all times," he said.

Robert Milliken

Lance Herbert Barnard, politician; born Launceston, Tasmania 1 May 1919; Deputy Prime Minister of Australia 1972-74; Minister for Defence 1972-73; died Melbourne 6 August 1997.

Bill Shine

What set Bill Shine apart from most character actors was a readiness to have a go at anything which did not compromise his genial gusto.

In the classics or intimate revue, Ealing comedy or Victorian melodrama, Restoration comedy or English farce, his line in affable loafers, military gentlemen, vacuous dandies and dim-witted aristocrats made him one of the busiest and most popular of supporting players on stage or screen for almost seven decades. Toff or twerp, he did not mind, as long as he could register his brand of British, or Irish, fun – he had particular successes in Shaw, O'Casey and Paul Vincent Carroll – with that unpretentious zest and snappy timing that were part of his technical equipment.

One of the last players to understand the dramatic uses and abuses of a monochrome in comedy, farce and pantomime (as squires and barons), Shine could disport himself in old-fashioned musical comedy with as much relish as he brought to Irish melodrama. He was, after all, born into the business.

His father, Wilfred Shine, ruled in melodrama of all sorts in the early part of the century and even while Billy was a boy, toured the Lancashire comedy The Jeffersons for seven unbroken years. In 1924 he brought it to London. To the critic James Agate's grief, it foundered, not because it was a bundle of clichés, but because Londoners could not understand the humour of Lancashire as Agate did.

Apart from his notable father, Shine's mother, two uncles, an aunt and grandmother were also on the stage. It was while learning his trade sweeping it or as call boy or watching from the wings that young Billy was judged qualified to make his

début. In 1917 he played a Stork in *Princess Poy* at the Winter Gardens, New Brighton.

At 15 he appeared with Sybil Thorndike and Charles Laughton at the Arts Theatre in George Moore's Shakespeare play, *The Making of an Immortal*, but far from going into the theatre Shine seized the chance to work in the talkies throughout the next decade, the Thirties. He made 164 British films between 1929 (*High Seas*, *The Flying Scotsman* and *Under The Greenwood Tree*) and 1971 (*Not Tonight, Darling*).

Highlights in between ranged from Sir Percy Blakeney in *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1934) to Ealing comedy, Tommy Trinder's *Champagne Charlie* (1944) to *The Red Shoes* (1948), *The Children Hundreds* (1949), *Father Brown* (1954), *The Deep Blue Sea* (1955), *Richard III* (1955) and *Blue Murder at St Trinian's* (1957). One of his most characteristic supporting parts on screen was that of the wizard-prang type of public school RAF officer; though since he was making as many as four films a year (and usually also appearing on stage at night), Shine's talent for the cameo appearance was never easy to pin down.

During the Second World War, though, he was back on stage touring for the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (later to become the Arts Council) in a repertoire of plays headed by Shaw's *The Man of Destiny*. Then he joined what every playgoer then regarded as the next best thing to a national theatre, since subsidised theatre was then unheard of, Alec Clunes's Festival of English Drama at the Arts. It started with seasons of Farquhar, Sheridan, Pinero and Shaw, and Shine was in everything. I still remember him amusingly alighting on that tiny stage in a pair of angel's wings



Shine (far left) knew how to keep both his face and his acting straight; with, from left, John Franklyn, Frederick Benwell and Joan Stenbridge-Bennett in *The Cave and the Garden* at the Players' Theatre, 1946
Photograph: Mander & Mitchelson

in *The Simplicity of the Unexpected Isles* – "dropping in from the Elysian fields," as J.C. Trewin put it.

His Joxer Daly in *Juno and the Paycock* first appeared at Birmingham Rep in 1945 and was revived at Henley 30 years later. His Conn in Dion Boucicault's *The Shaughraun* at the Old Bedford, Camden Town (1950), was something for collectors. So was the whole season. When shall we get a chance to recapture ourselves with such melodramatic treasures as *East Lynne* ("Dead – and never called me mother!"), *Black Eyed Susan* ("Intoxicated too – I must avoid him"), *Trilby* (in

which he made a fine Svengali) and *The Belle*. How to avoid burlesquing such pieces while playing them for all they were worth? The audience could be as much of a nuisance as anything, giggling at every chance, yet silence was finally imposed by an indefinable theatrical power and Shine knew how to keep both his face and his acting straight.

A year later some of that power was felt again at the old St James's Theatre in London where he played Sewer Man to Marjorie Hunt's Mad Woman of Chailott. Shine surely had something of his father's spirit in him. Even if most modern memories

recall first the handle-bar moustache, the upper-class accent and the gallery of well-intentioned bunglers, adroitly-brained aristocrats, amiable incompetents and a whole range of RAF types, eccentric clerics and charming loafers, Shine was trained in a school where the whole physique counted for theatrical expression. He had long since learned how to turn tallness, a sleepy-eyed look, a nimble carriage and a lean build to comprehensive comical or arresting advantage; whether as Lord Summerhayes in *Misalliance* (1943), Horace Vale in *The Magistrate* (1944), King Philip II of Spain in *That Lady* (1951),

Lord Foppington in *Vanbrugh's Virtue in Danger* (1966) or Lord Littlehampton in *Maudie* (1974).

On television his most recent part in the 1980s was that of the eccentric inventor Black in the series *Supergun*, with (of course) smoking jacket and cap. Clichés? Shine gave them a new sheen.

Adam Benedict

Wilfred William Denis Shine, actor; born London 20 October 1911; married first Julia Lang (one son); marriage dissolved 1949; second 1949 Diana Cecil (née Manship; one son); died London 24 July 1997.

Luther Allison

The death of the blues musician Luther Allison has come at a particularly poignant time, when he was making the best music of his career and being recognised as one of the leading exponents of the blues guitar. In May 1997 he had won three W.C. Handy blues awards including Blues Entertainer of the Year. This August Bank Holiday weekend he was due to headline the Great British R&B Festival at Colne, Lancashire.

With his new success, Allison had developed a potent blend of blues, soul, funk and rock 'n' roll. He often worked with a national recognition through the compilation album *Sweet Home Chicago*, for Delmark Records. This prompted Delmark to record an album, *Love Me Mama*, with him and his then group, the Blue Nebulae, in 1969. The label's manager, Bob Koester, said that he believed Allison to be "one of the most original exponents of the modern blues". The same year he appeared at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival and played on the album *Further On Up The Road* by Shakey Jake Harris and Slim's Got This Thing Goin' On by Sunnyland Slim.

Solo success seemed possible when he became the first – and, in the event, the only – blues performer to sign with the funk-Motown label, but the organisation did not know how to promote the three albums he made for their subsidiary,

selves the Rolling Stones, after a Muddy Waters song. They soon tired of the name and became the Four Jivers. Allison was becoming a skilled guitarist, influenced by B.B. King and Otis Rush, and he was encouraged to sing by Freddie King. When King found out outside Chicago, he took over his residency at a local club.

Luther also jammed on stage with Howlin' Wolf and for several years was a blues journeyman, working with Little Richard, Magic Slim and Muddy Waters.

In 1967 he achieved some national recognition through the compilation album *Sweet Home Chicago*, for Delmark Records. This prompted Delmark to record an album, *Love Me Mama*, with him and his then group, the Blue Nebulae, in 1969. The label's manager, Bob Koester, said that he believed Allison to be "one of the most original exponents of the modern blues". The same year he appeared at the Ann Arbor Blues Festival and played on the album *Further On Up The Road* by Shakey Jake Harris and Slim's Got This Thing Goin' On by Sunnyland Slim.

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Gordy. *Bad News is Coming* (1972), *Luther's Blues* (1974) and *Night Life* (1976) are now collectors' items.

In 1976 Allison came to Europe for the first time. He was disillusioned by the commercial failure of his Gordy albums and he noted that Memphis Slim and Champion Jack Dupree had settled with considerable success in Europe. He moved to France and he told audiences, "I don't speak French but my guitar does".

Many of his concert performances have found their way on to albums, notably *Live in Paris* (1979). Earlier this year, a compilation was issued, *Where Have You Been? Luther Allison – Live in Montreux, 1976-1994*.

In order to appeal to a wide following, Allison included some rock numbers by Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones in his repertoire. On being told that he played like the Stones, he said, "That's a no-no. As far as I'm concerned they play like me." He worked with his son, Bernard, a singer/guitarist who has released his own albums with his father playing harmonica.

In 1988 Allison returned to his blues roots with the highly acclaimed album, *Serious*. This obtained recognition in the United States and he was signed to the Chicago-based Alligator Records with *Soul Train* (1993) being his first American album in 17 years. The maga-



"I'm unstoppable": Allison at the 100 Club, London in 1988
Photograph: Dave Peabody / Rediffers

zine *Guitar Player* thought it combined "the wisdom of a master storyteller with the elegance of B.B. King, the elasticity of Buddy Guy and the big sting of Albert King". The second album, *Blue Streak* (1995), topped the US blues charts for 19 weeks. Acknowledging the applause at the Chicago Blues Festival, he shouted, "I'm not

only back. I'm unstoppable." On 10 July while performing on stage, Luther Allison felt dizzy and lost co-ordination. He was taken to hospital where he was diagnosed as having inoperable lung cancer. He cancelled appearances and in order to help with medical bills, a fund-raising night at the 100 Club in London had just been arranged.

His best epitaph would be a line from a *Guitar Player* review: "He played the blues as if his life was hanging in the balance".

Spencer Leigh

Luther Allison, singer and guitarist; born Mayflower, Arkansas 17 August 1939; married (one son); died Madison, Wisconsin 12 August 1997.

Sir Tom Normanton

Tom Normanton was an improbable combination of the flamboyant, the phlegmatic and the industrious. He was distinguished as one of those few young Englishmen who, having visited Germany in the Thirties, saw the coming of the Second World War; he was a solid, but not always obedient, Conservative backbencher in the House of Commons for 17 years; and he was an industrialist of some distinction, above all in the textile industry, on which his family's fortunes were built.

As a student at Manchester University, Normanton visited Germany in 1938: he attended one of Adolf Hitler's great rallies, and came home convinced that the Führer was determined on European war. He immediately enlisted in the Territorial Army, and when the war he had foreseen began in 1939 he found himself in service in France, at the Battle of Calais, where he was wounded, and subsequently, in North Africa, where he was mentioned in despatches.

Prior to his wartime military service, he had been involved in Conservative student politics at Manchester, and after the war in local politics in Rochdale, near to where he was working, at Brookside Mills, the family cotton firm. After a couple of unsuccessful attempts to secure a seat in Parliament in Rochdale, in 1959 and 1964, he defeated the Liberal favourite and Deputy Chairman of the Party, Michael Winstanley, at Chaddle in the 1970 general election.

Once in the House of Commons, Normanton made his presence felt. He displayed a distinctive combination of a hard-line attitude on matters domestic with a passionate enthusiasm for Beveridge's creation of the welfare state. He advocated the retention of corporal punishment, and the reintroduction of capital punishment. In most respects, therefore, in the east politics of the 1970s, he seemed to be the perfect Little Englander. But the fire of the European idea still burned deep within him.

Like many others who had suffered in the second great European war of the century, Normanton saw the future of his country as best served by an integration of the major democratic states which emerged from the conflagration of 1939-45. He saw no distinction between patriotism, which had brought him to the war in 1939, and the "federalism" which seemed to be emerging after its end.

Thus, he enthusiastically accepted service in the British delegation to the European Assembly and, therefore, in the elected European Parliament. (Indeed he was the last Conservative politician to sit at both Westminster and Strasbourg at the same time.) Yet, towards the end of his days, he used his not inconsiderable influence, in 1992, to ensure that there was a British celebration to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the D-Day

Normandy landings. To him, there was no contradiction between remembering the determination and valour of 1944 and 1945 and the advocacy of an ever-closer European Union. In this respect, his argument for an intimate relationship between the – by now – democratic states of Western Europe was akin to the views propounded by Charles de Gaulle when, after his return to power in 1958, he moved towards a close Franco-German alliance of the kind that had not been envisaged since the Carolingian Empire of the 9th century.

Though I confess that I could never sympathise with the capacity of Tom Normanton to relate, successfully, his intense patriotism to his European idealism, I always found him to be a man of complete integrity in the pursuit of both of these ideals.

Patrick Cosgrave

Tom Normanton, businessman and politician; born 12 March 1917; MP (Conservative) for Chaddle 1970-87; UK Member European Parliament 1973-79; MEP (Conservative) for Cheshire East, 1979-89; KT 1987; married 1942 Annabel Yates (two sons, one daughter); died 6 August 1997.

Normanton: hard-line

Normanton became a powerful advocate of British integration into the newly emerging European Economic Community. At the same time, he supported many domestic measures which seem antipathetic to the post-war mood of social welfare, exemplified by Beveridge's creation of the welfare state. He advocated the retention of corporal punishment, and the reintroduction of capital punishment. In most respects, therefore, in the east politics of the 1970s, he seemed to be the perfect Little Englander. But the fire of the European idea still burned deep within him.

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Drummond Matthews

In 1955-57 I shared a small lab with Drummond Matthews at the FIDS base on Signy Island in the South Orkneys, writes W. L. N. Titchell.

Bob White's obituary [1 August] was rather dismissive of the Antarctic experience. Matthews quickly became a resourceful and resolute polar traveller and his knowledge of Coronation Island was equalled only by that of his companion and surveyor, Douglas Bridges. In the southern win-

ter of 1956 fast ice did not form in the South Orkneys, so it was not possible to sledge across the sea, but Matthews manhandled sledges over glaciers and mountains during three expeditions on Coronation Island. Matthews Island was named after him.

Before his PhD Drum Matthews had already been the senior author of a FIDS publication that today remains a major work on the geology of the South Orkney Islands.

Announcements for Genetic BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding announcements, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5UL, telephoned to 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2011, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line (VAT extra). They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Birthdays

Miss Sarah Brightman, soprano, 36; Mr Ronald Campbell MP, 54; Mr David Crosby, singer, 56; Mrs Jennifer d'Abbo, chairman, Moyes Stevens Investments, 52; Mr Fred Davis, snooker player, 54; Vice Admiral John Dunn, Chief of Defence Staff (Systems), 53; Mr Buddy Greco, jazz pianist and singer, 71; Mr David Hopkinson, former chairman, Harrisons and Crossfield, 71; The Rev Dom Anthony Philip Jebb, for-

mer Headmaster, Downside School, 65; Professor Sir Andrew Kay, surgeon, 81; Sir Stuart McKinnon, High Court judge, 59; Sir Robin McLaren, former ambassador to China, 63; Mr Steve Martin, actor and comedian, 52; Lord Mishcon, solicitor, 82; Dr Oliver Neville, consultant to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, 68; Mr Frederick Bagshaw, jeweller, 66; Mr Tony Scannell, actor, 52; Sir Ronald Stewart, former chairman, London Brick Co, 94; The Right Rev Hewlett Thompson, Bishop of Exeter, 68;

Lord Whaddon, former MP, chairman, Cambridge Chemical Co, 70; Mr Sydney Wooderson, athlete, 85.

Anniversaries

Dr Florence Estienne Marie Casaubon, classical scholar, 1599; Sir Walter Besant, novelist and philanthropist, 1836; Britton Riviere, artist, 1840; John Galsworthy, novelist and playwright, 1867. Deaths: Augustus Montague Toplady, hymn-

writer and author of "Rock of Ages", 1778; George Combe, phrenologist, 1858; Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, first Viscount Northcliffe, newspaper proprietor, 1922; William Randolph Hearst, newspaper proprietor, 1951; Benoit Brochi, writer, 1956; Clifford Odets, playwright, 1963; Leonard Sidney Woolf, publisher, 1969; Oscar Levant, composer and pianist, 1972; John Boynton Priestley, novelist and playwright, 1984. On this day: the French released William of Orange at the Bat-

tle of Mons, 1678; Trisana da Cunha was annexed to Great Britain, 1816; Cologne Cathedral, started in 1248, was completed, 1880; the steamer *Islander*, carrying 33m in gold, struck an iceberg off Alaska and sank, with the loss of 70 lives, 1901; the BBC showed its first feature film on television, *The Student of Prague*, with Anton Wallbrook, 1936; Japan surrendered to the Allies unconditionally, 1945; after peace talks in Cyprus broke down, Turkish troops launched an attack on Nicosia, 1974. Today is

the Feast Day of St Athanasia of Aegina, St Eusebius of Rome, St Pachanan, St Marcellus of Apamea, St Maximilian Kolbe.

Lectures

National Gallery: Kathleen Adler, "Bill, Dick and Handmade" (5); De-gas, *Carla Pellegrini*, 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Andrew Spink, "Medieval Crafts: stained and painted glass", 2.30pm.

This Gallery: Jonathan Blackwood, "Approaches to the Portrait in 1920s Britain: Epstein, Frampton and Lewis", 1pm. British Museum: Angela Evans, "Sutton Hoo 1939-91: the story of the excavations", 1.15pm.

Changing of the Guard
The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

كلنا من الأصل

Hume has a bigger job than being president

Just to see Ken Maginnis and Martin McGuinness engaged in debate on the BBC the other night was a revelation. In conventional terms, their televised meeting advanced no positions, saw no meeting of minds. But the very animation of their encounter once they had shown they could talk to one another was compelling evidence that meetings and conversation have to be the way forward in Northern Ireland.

The immediate prospects for the resumption of peace talks including both Sinn Féin and enough Unionists to make majority representation credible remain dim, but there are good auguries. There is, for example, the moderation and flexibility displayed by the August marchers, and Mr Maginnis's growing belief that there is a Unionist case to be made before uncommitted audiences.

During the past few days, however, the sky has darkened over another quarter of Ulster, although this may seem a strange way to greet the possibility that the leader of the SDLP, the moderate nationalist John Hume, is considering allowing his name to go forward for the presidency of the Irish Republic.

Mr Hume is clearly interested. It is indeed a position for which he might be said to be uniquely qualified. Here is a veteran of the peaceful struggle for the unification of the island of Ireland into a single state. His party has pro-

vided legitimacy to unmet attempts to start and continue dialogue between Protestant and Catholic, nationalists and legitimists, between the British and Irish governments. Mr Hume has operated as go-between, interlocutor, confidential agent, able to converse with Sinn Féin without losing the respect of some, at least, of the Unionists. Would not electing him president of the Irish Republic be a sign and symbol of the essentially peaceful intent of most Irish nationalists, north and south of the United Kingdom's border with Ireland? Would not the election of a member of the United Kingdom's House of Commons (who is also a member of the European Parliament) indicate just how close-bound are the politics of Britain and Ireland? Would not his election accelerate the peace process by placing at the heart of the Irish state a man of the North who is committed, heart and soul, to peaceful rearrangement of Ireland's political geography?

Unfortunately, the answers are no, no and no. Mr Hume's candidature would doubtless play well in the United States of America, where they like their Irish symbolism as brash as the banners in a St Patrick's Day parade. Mr Hume is evidently popular in the Republic, and his candidacy would solve a lot of problems there. His standing would get the leaders of Fianna Fáil and to a lesser extent the other parties off the book — they would not have to

campaign or (hard on the heels of a general election) pay for a campaign. Mr Hume would be a neat-seeming replacement for the popular Mary Robinson. In a very different way, he has star qualities, as she does.

But the evident desire of Bertie Ahern and his colleagues in the Irish cabinet to see the post of president filled by someone with a little more glamour than their party colleague Albert Reynolds does not make a convincing case for Mr Hume. The Irish presidency is a part-time job. Mrs Robinson may have cut an attractive figure but a cold-eyed appraisal of her

achievement would find it hard to identify much in mainstream political life. She has cheered people up and helped to make the Irish feel good about themselves at a time when the Republic has become an Atlantic tiger economy. She has very definitely kept out of the affairs of Northern Ireland (beyond an innocuous walkabout in Belfast) and out of social affairs of the Republic too, beyond offering Irish womanhood a more compelling role model than either Dana or Sínead O'Connor. And this is in the nature of the job. It is not a movers-and-shakers job: it is a figurehead job.

More than that, though, a John Hume candidacy would be bad for the Republic and bad for the prospect of peace in Northern Ireland. Ireland, it so happens, is going to need quite a lot of symbolic politics during the next few years as it negotiates the shoals of the Euro (Ireland joins, Britain doesn't), the expansion of the European Union eastwards and reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. There is talent aplenty in the Irish business community — isn't there an acceptable candidate to be found there? Mr Hume deserves a great deal at the hands of his fellow country people, north and south, but his job and that of the SDLP is not over. He is too valuable to the peace process to go now. Not only would Sinn Féin benefit from further erosion of the SDLP's constituency strength — an inevitable result of John Hume's departure — but an essential counterweight would go.

This is a tender moment in the great sequence of Belfast talks and talks about talks. To have a senior Ulster political player who says he wants to unify Ireland by assent (and so necessarily gradually) suddenly becoming the Irish head of state, successor to Eamon de Valera, implicitly asserting the old Irish state claim to jurisdiction over Ulster, is provocative. Would the Irish Republic open its presidency to any other member of a foreign parliament or invite an Irish person cleaving to the

union with Britain? No. John Hume's candidacy would be regarded by even moderate Unionist opinion as a subterfuge, to obtain by symbols what should only come about, if at all, by the free assent of majorities. For the sake of his neighbours in Ulster and his country — however he defines its borders — Mr Hume should immediately declare himself *hors de combat* in order to focus, yet again, on the road to consensual peace.

Save a Guard — aim for that bear

What's the point of the Common-wealth if truck drivers in Ontario are not prepared to drive a bit more recklessly? Canadian lorries have not been killing enough black bears to satisfy our Ministry of Defence. The MoD needs some 50 bearskins a year to clothe the heads of the Foot Guards. (Artificial alternatives become bedraggled "like a bad hair day".) But in this age of animal rights, only bears already dead of natural causes will do. Here is one of those modern moments — political leaders who won't let fighting men wear dead animal skins — which would have every earlier generation of soldier, from Caesar to Slim, gaping slack-jawed with incomprehension.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Confusion over student fees policy

Sir: Your headline on the Government's higher education fees proposal, "Last minute bid to avoid fiasco over fees exemption" (13 August) is exactly right — a fiasco is precisely what the Government has created.

I have every sympathy for my constituent Lily Williams, quoted in your article as "disillusioned" over the Government's conduct. She and many others have written to me in complete confusion over the Government's intentions. There was nothing in Labour's manifesto to indicate the direction they were intending to take, nor does there appear to have been much strategic thinking behind the hurried announcement of a waiver of fees for voluntary work, and their even more hurried announcement that all students with deferred entry may be exempt.

It is astonishing that the Department for Education and Employment was prepared to leak these waiver rumours at the weekend yet refused in the following days to publish full details to reassure worried students. This government, having pledged priority for "education, education, education", now appears to be bent on spin, fudge and betrayal. Dr EVAN HARRIS MP (Oxford West and Abingdon, Lib Dem) House of Commons London SW1

Sir: David Walker ("Why university is a journey too far", 11 August), is led astray by stereotypes.

His argument is that most students are middle class (true). It costs public money to allow students to live away from home (true). This represents a subsidy to the middle class (true — up to a point). Therefore students should live at home.

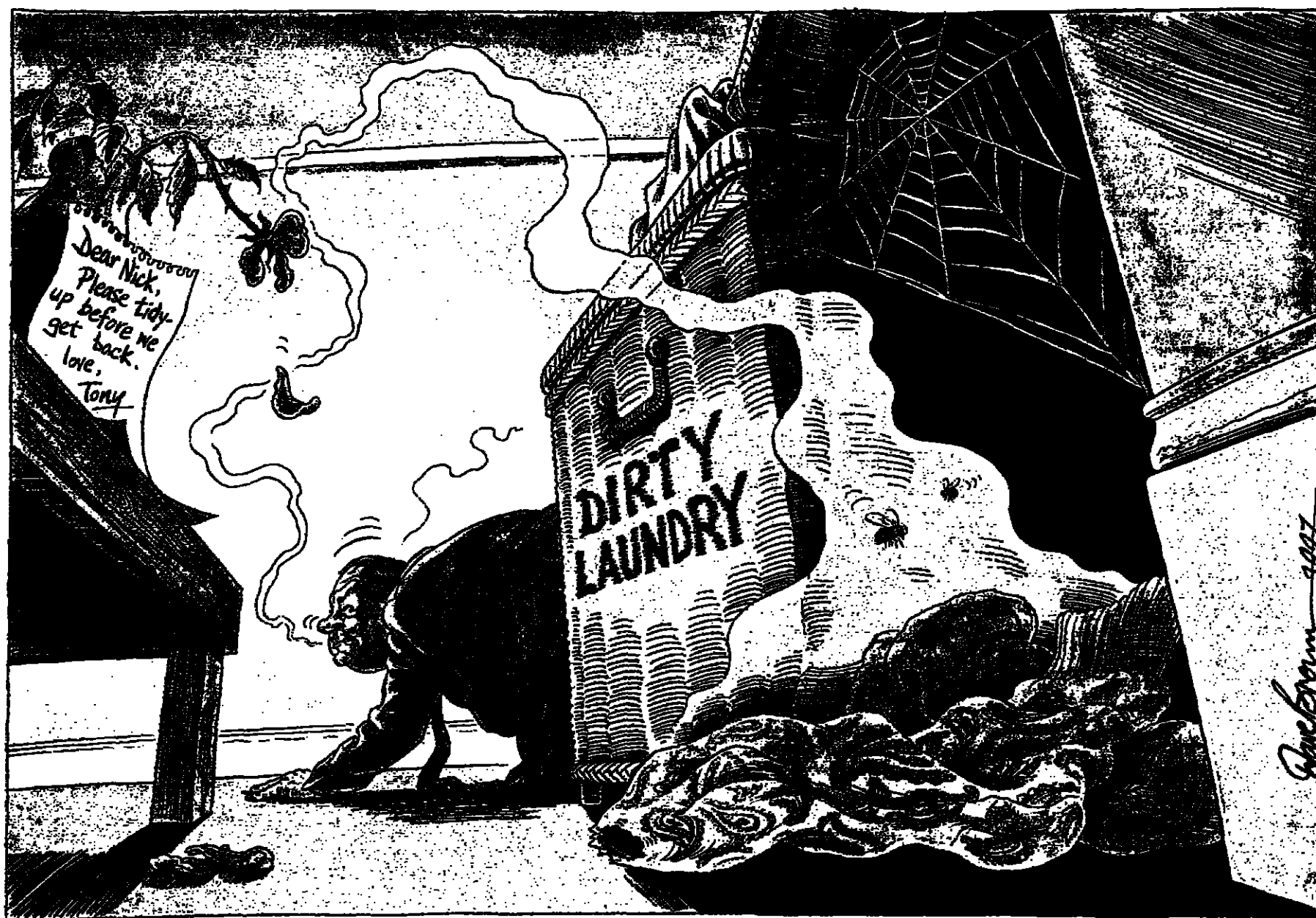
The conclusion is false. If the "subsidy" were to be withdrawn, it would mean that students would live at home — unless, of course, they could afford to live at university and thereby gain the benefits that Mr Walker sneers at. (Getting a worthwhile degree requires more than nine-to-five commitment.)

For the wealthy, with a home computer, books, car, ample private living and working space etc, losing this subsidy would be a drag but not a disaster. For the working-class student the loss would make higher education all but impossible. They could certainly never hope to compete on level terms.

The social class distribution of university education is skewed enough as it is. Forcing students to study from home would make the situation worse.

P K BURGESS President Association of University Teachers London W11

Sir: Over 20 years ago I left North London to study for a degree in Middlesex. Aside from giving me an insight into a North-East culture still little appreciated in the South, it also forced me to take responsibility for my own actions, in a way that probably would not have occurred had I stayed in London near or with my parents. The result of my trip north was that I got a good honours degree, decided that I was definitely a socialist and I still get on with my parents. I think it used to be called a liberal education. KEITH FLETT London N17



Sir: David Walker quotes a Leeds University professor as saying, "Students who live at home don't integrate; it limits the range of experience they are subjected to; they are not as rounded as students."

That is a nonsensical generalisation. All Open University students live at home yet many are among the most socially and intellectually rounded undergraduate and postgraduate students in Britain.

Dr GARY SLAPPER Director, The Law Programme The Open University Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire

'Ignorant' love of music

Sir: Adrian Jack cannot be allowed to get away with his pompous and intemperate attack on "ignorant listeners" at Evgeny Kissin's Prom (review, 12 August) who "didn't know that it's traditional in this particular work to begin the scherzo virtually *attacca* (played without a pause)" and "started applauding the first movement" of the Chopin Sonata. The central joy of the Proms is that there are thousands of ignorant, but passionate, listeners delighting in this extraordinary music festival. Who cares if the triumphant end of a movement brilliantly played brings a burst of applause, however ignorant? Certainly not the composers, who were used to it.

As for Mr Jack's *Summführer* encouragement of the BBC to "tell audiences not to clap between movements", perhaps they would

also ask concerto violinists not to re-tune, forbid audience members who have been struggling not to cough during the music from clearing their throats and sack any conductor who wipes his brow, lest any of these upsets Mr Jack's obviously very brittle concentration. MICHAEL VARCOE-COCKS London W6

Boredom in the infantry

Sir: The Army may recruit from the "scum" of this divided society ("What do we want, monks or robots?", 6 August), but they have little to occupy their free time except drink.

A young infantryman I know, a good rugby player, finds he rarely has a chance to play team sports, and the chances of educational courses are nil. He has done well to be a lance corporal, but succeeding in a tough course for promotion to corporal means that he will not get that extra stripe for perhaps 18 months. So there is a lot of boredom in the ranks.

I understand that the American services have had a campaign to decrease drunkenness by providing many more facilities for energetic leisure activities, and support for educational courses. It seems that similar facilities are much needed not only in Cyprus, but also in Germany and other Army bases. MOLLY ROSENTHAL Denbigh

Heavy price of angering the US

Sir: Simon Faulkner (letter, 9 August) is right to dub the sanctions regime against Iraq "barbaric". The United States is currently blocking dozens of food and medicine shipments to Iraq, allowable even under UN Resolution 986. I have in my possession a copy of a letter signed by David H. Harmon, acting supervisor of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (US Treasury), in which he threatens aid workers illegally collecting and transporting medical relief supplies to the people of Iraq with "up to 12 years in prison and \$1m in fines".

The blocking of civilian access to food and medicine, as a means of punishing "pariah" states, is now part of American policy, pursued through the United Nations where possible and unilaterally, through extraterritorial legislation, where not.

Apart from Iraq, Cuba is the most obvious victim. Through domestic law (primarily the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act and the 1996 Helms-Burton Act) the US is fostering malnutrition in the Cuban population. The American Association for World Health, the US committee for the World Health Organisation, reported in March 1997 that US policy on Cuba was contributing to "serious nutritional defects, particularly among pregnant women ... food shortages were linked to a devastating outbreak of

neuropathy numbering in the tens of thousands".

The US blockade on Cuban access to water-treatment chemicals and spare parts for water-supply systems has led to a "rising incidence of morbidity and mortality". Denied nausea-preventing drugs, 35 surveyed children in a cancer ward "were vomiting on average 28 to 30 times a day". The last UN General Assembly vote (October 1996) on US policy towards Cuba was 137 against and three for.

Washington worked hard to impose Iraq-style sanctions on Libya, via an extension of Security Council Resolution 748 (1992), but was frustrated by the European need for Libyan oil. The US urged total UN sanctions on North Korea in 1991. Here Iraq-style sanctions were blocked by the threat of a Chinese veto in the Security Council.

American foreign policy represents a multifaceted violation of the UN Genocide Convention (Articles II and III) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. GEOFF SIMONS Stockport, Greater Manchester

BBC evolution

Sir: Let me set readers' minds at rest following Rob Brown's piece about the future of *Newsnight* (11 August). There is no plan to make the programme "kinder" or "softer" as he alleges. This is not to say that *Newsnight* will not evolve.

All programmes do over time. But it is a mistake to equate a broader agenda with a softer agenda. *Newsnight* will maintain its commitment to rigorous analytical journalism, whether achieved through crafted tape packages or searching studio interviews.

The suggestion that the viewing figure of 1.3 million for the Saturday editions of *Newsnight* during the election was about four times that of a "bad night" during the week is inaccurate. In the week of 20 July, for example, the programme averaged 1.2 million. JOHN MORRISON Editor, Daily News Programmes BBC News London W12

Vive la France

Sir: I was absolutely stunned to read (report, 9 August) that the French are considered by tourists to be "chronically rude, aggressive, dirty, idle and disorganised". I have just returned from a holiday in Languedoc and found the complete opposite.

Was the young salesman in Monoprix at Béziers "idle" when he took the trouble to take a shirt out of a sealed packet for my husband to try on? Was the waitress in our hotel "dirty" when she dusted the tables and examined every glass before we ate outside? Was the charming elderly gentleman in Montpellier "rude and aggressive" when he showed me where the town centre was and wished me a happy day in Montpellier?

I say "Vive la France" — I can't wait to visit again. JOSE SEGAL Harrow, Middlesex

Inflation not beaten yet

Sir: Underlying inflation (excluding mortgage interest payments) hit 3 per cent in the year to July 1997; the Treasury states that inflation will fall back to the Treasury's target rate of 2.5 per cent ("Headline inflation at two year high", 13 August).

We believe that inflation is now far more serious than most commentators suggest, since the current rate is heavily flattered by a one-off factor — the recent rise in sterling. Our UK economic model recently calculated the impact, on current UK inflation, of the near 25 per cent rise in sterling since last summer. Based on the proportion of total UK input costs represented by imports, we estimate that the 3 per cent inflation rate for the 12 months to July 1997 would have been at least 2.5 per cent higher if sterling had remained static over the last 12 months. In other words, the fundamental (sterling adjusted) inflation rate is around 5.5 per cent.

The inflationary pressures come home to roost in 1998. It is likely that, between now and next summer, there will be no significant net rise in sterling. For the Treasury to hit its inflation target of around 2.5 per cent in the 12 months to July 1998, the Bank of England will have to take further action to rein in consumer spending. This must involve still higher interest rates. M C FITZPATRICK Head of Economics Chantrey Vellacott London WC1

The problem God can solve

Sir: In defence of the Christian faith I cannot let Lynne Wallis's article "Praise the Lord? Not me" (8 August) pass without comment. If it had been directed at other believing groups, such as Muslims, or social groups, such as gays, the riots might have already occurred.

I come into the category of possessing "a great yawning gap to fill, or a problem I imagine God will help me overcome". I suppose she is right, as He has given eternal life, the lack of which had hitherto been a problem. JOHN SLOAN Leeds

Sir: The Rev Neil Gardner (letter, 12 August) asks who Lynne Wallis thinks first advocated Sunday as a day of rest, and answers: "God, I believe." No, He didn't. It was the Emperor Constantine.

The Sabbath is the biblical seventh day of rest. Sunday was the eighth day, when He "created" Adam — a working day. Sunday, called the Lord's Day in Christianity, is the weekly memorial of the resurrection of the Christ from the dead on the first day of the week. Constantine introduced the first civil legislation concerning Sunday in 321 when he decreed that all work should cease on Sunday, except that farmers could work if necessary. REG HEMS Cockfosters, Hertfordshire

Ungrammatical

Sir: Grammar tests are to be put on ice because "many English teachers [are] not confident about teaching sentence structure" (report, 12 August). In other words, they don't know how to construe the language they purport to teach. How did they qualify as English teachers? Mrs A FULLER Tamworth, Staffordshire

The master of spin goes in to bat

Peter Mandelson defends himself, in conversation with Donald Macintyre, against accusations that he is the 'self-appointed acting PM', and explains why he wants to be elected to Labour's NEC

It's Tuesday night, and a world quite outside the media and political beltway Peter Mandelson is normally assumed to inhabit. Labour's most controversial figure is charming a large group of leading Asian journalists and editors in Westminster's best known Indian restaurant.

The event was arranged only last Thursday, but everyone who is anyone in the thriving South Asian sector of London's fourth estate is out in force. The atmosphere is convivial, the curry the Kundan's most delicious, the MP Keith Vaz's welcoming speech a gracious tribute to how much "we in the Labour Party all owe to the Minister without Portfolio". In his own speech Mandelson lays heavy emphasis on the need to improve race relations, and he appeals to the editors to help make the Millennium Experience a true celebration for every aspect of a "multi-faith, multi-community" British society. There is the obligatory garland - of appropriately red roses - to go round the minister's neck. There are quite a lot of jokes about his ubiquity; the distinguished Indian magazine editor K.K. Singh remarks that the Minister without Portfolio is really "the minister of every portfolio". But then Mandelson describes how proud he was recently to be given - by the long-retired civil servant Max Nicholson, who worked for his grandfather Herbert Morrison - a faded photograph of the then deputy prime minister helping the first Indian high commissioner to raise the new flag that momentous August day exactly 50 years ago. There is a burst of warmly spontaneous applause.

It's difficult, at least just now, to imagine an encounter with Fleet Street and the mainstream TV networks passing off quite as amiably as this one. Mandelson is wearily annoyed with the latest offence: a story apparently written by a *Times* diarist who lives two doors down from him in Notting Hill, and has taken the trouble to spot that his car tax disc has run out. But this is trivial compared with a fortnight of relentless headlines depicting him as arch manipulator of the news, Rasputin, self-

appointed acting Prime Minister and goodness knows what else. Mandelson has become the story.

About the reasons for this, he is emphatically clear: "The Tories say it. The BBC run with it and the newspapers run with it and report it as fact. Whatever it is, Mandelson's taking over; Mandelson's a megalomaniac. Mandelson's doing this; Mandelson's doing that. It's all a way of diverting attention from what the Tories really fear, which is the Government's record, its effectiveness and its enduring popularity. They'd rather discuss anything other than that. If they can set me up as a whipping-boy, they have no hesitation in doing so."

He isn't even in the Cabinet, and yet has he not thrust himself into the limelight as the government's chief ministerial spokesman?

"I was appointed on 1 May as minister responsible for co-ordinating the presentation of government policy, in effect being the government spokesman. Instead of being behind the scenes off the record, an 'in the dark' brief, I'm a spokesman. What is surprising or unusual about that? It becomes particularly exposed in August when so many other ministers are away. Normally, departmental issues would be fronted by departmental ministers."

What's more, he says, the big media events of this month have been issues that have certainly affected the Government, but, by their very nature, aren't matters of departmental policy: the tragic suicide of the MP Gordon McMaster, the failure to win Uxbridge, the break-up of Robin Cook's marriage, Lord Simon's shares. "I was asked to carry on co-ordinating the Government's message during August. I've been doing it since May. But no one's commented about it or cared about it. It's just been there. But in August things which go completely unremarked for the rest of the year suddenly become stories. That is the definition of an August story."

So let's turn to the top item on the charge sheet, that he wound up the story on a Foreign

Office investigation into the leaking of information to Chris Patten's biographer Jonathan Dimbleby for the crude purpose of distracting attention from Robin Cook's marital break-up.

Not so, he says emphatically. That frantic Saturday, when it became clear that the *News of the World* was going to do the worst, after taking two surgeries in Hartlepool Mandelson sped to Downing Street to co-ordinate every detail of the response with the Foreign Secretary, who himself was travelling down from Edinburgh. He didn't even know about the *Sunday Times* until the Saturday night, and though he absorbed its contents it was "pretty low down the pecking order" compared with the problems generated by the *News of the World*. It wasn't until the following day that, faced with demands for confirmation, Mandelson had himself briefed, and established that it was true.

John Soper, the BBC duty political correspondent, had indeed been told by a Downing Street official that Mandelson would respond to a question on the Patten affair at the end of his BBC *World this Weekend* interview on the Cook affair, which had been easily the most sensible way of dealing with it. But hadn't Soper himself implied clearly the following day that he had been encouraged to pursue the story as a welcome distraction from the Cook story?

That wasn't the case, says Mandelson. He had been among those seeking confirmation of the story. What's more, that claim was a "piece of vanity broadcasting by John Soper. My objection was that the Tories started personal attacks on me, as they always do. The BBC drove the agenda and the papers reported all of it as fact. There are as many macho BBC editors manipulating the news as there are party spin doctors. And as for some of the political correspondents, they are vaulting over each other in their ambition to take Robin Oakley's job. [Oakley is the BBC's political editor.] Hopefully Robin will be around for a long time."

Is it really in the Government's interests to attack BBC journalists in this way, or to have had his famous subsequent spat with the BBC *World at One* presenter Martha Kearney? He hadn't attacked Martha Kearney - "read the transcript". But there had been an agreement that he would be questioned on the Government's record over its first 100 days. "Why should we

accept the BBC agenda, which is essentially about itself and its own preoccupation with itself and my role at the expense of the listeners' interest in the Government's record, their schools, their health service, the fight against crime, what we're doing about unemployment. You don't usually make converts when you take on a BBC interviewer, but my postbag suggests the public likes politicians who stand up for themselves. Conservatives are outraged by my audacity. Labour people give three cheers that I stuck to my agenda."

Mandelson is palpably frustrated that the press ignores most of his activity as a below-the-line politician. Mandelson mates say that while his August job is to "make sure Tony Blair enjoys his holiday in peace, and to be a lightning conductor", luminaries of the seniority of Sir Robin Butler are already going round Whitehall saying what a good strategic job he is doing at the Cabinet Office. He himself says: "People just don't realise that about 20 per cent of my day is spent on press matters, and 80 per cent on the co-ordination of government business and strategic policy work." In normal times, "when I leave the 9am meeting each day [on government presentation, chaired by Mandelson], managing the press is in the hands of Alastair Campbell [Downing Street press secretary and, like the PM, on holiday] and his team. I often don't visit the subject again until the next day. I am involved in the detail of committee work and what the Cabinet Office does in knitting together what the Government is doing."

Some of this activity will surface dramatically today, when Mandelson devotes much of his Fabian Lecture to the topic of social exclusion, and the Prime Minister's orders for a new Cabinet Office unit, reporting directly to him, to redeem Labour's pre-election pledge to make Britain a less divided society. Mandelson's use of today's lecture to show that Labour is indeed sensitive to exclusion of the poor - or, as politicians prefer not to call it, the underclass - is an important marker for the Government. But it matters to him personally, too, as a candidate for election to the National Executive of the Labour Party.

Why is he standing, when surely he already

has all the power he can handle? First, because he thinks the NEC should be a proper executive body which takes a real grip of the party's administration and money, more than it does.

"I think having attended the NEC's meetings for 10 years as a senior party official, I do know something about how the party could be made more professional." But, secondly, because he believes: "The misgivings that some people have of me is of having seemingly unaccountable power, that I'm put in a position of influence, of leader's patronage, and have a clout and wield power which is wholly dependent on the leader and is not accountable to anything or anyone else in the party. I sympathise with that view. I'm not standing for the NEC because I want to distance myself from Tony Blair, or necessarily because I want to establish greater independence from Tony Blair - but because I want to be recognised by the party for what I am and what I do, in my own right. And for the party to feel that having put me in position and elected me to it, that I'm accountable to them as a result."

While Blair hasn't declared his hand, Mandelson remains firmly in favour of electoral reform - though to the alternative vote system which Liberal Democrats view as an unworthy substitute for true PR. On 1am Dalyell's steadfast opposition to Labour's devolution plans - including a remark that Mandelson's claim that it will underpin the union is "silly" - he says, sensibly, "You'll never silence I am, and in a party which is as strong as confident as ours, you shouldn't try to do so." But he insists that once the referendums are over, and assuming they produce a "yes" vote, "then I would expect Labour MPs to respect that mandate and act and vote accordingly in the House of Commons."

Will it not then be a grim setback for his political career if he fails to be elected to the NEC. No, he says, a "disappointment". Not many Labour politicians, particularly those below Cabinet rank, make it to the NEC on the first attempt. And, no, despite all the suggestions that he should be given a Cabinet job with all dispatch, he will not speculate on the subject. There are no early reshuffles in sight, and he is very happy doing his current job, thanks very much.

If nothing else, today's Fabian lecture should present a more rounded Mandelson than the pantomime villain image of the last fortnight.

Mandelson: I'm not standing for the NEC because I want to distance myself from Tony Blair... but because I want to be recognised by the party for what I am and what I do, in my own right

Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Rita, high priestess (special rates for Royals)

On Monday, as sweltering afternoon turned to warm evening in the small Derbyshire village of Lower Pilsley, local woman Tina Cave noticed a humming sound in the sky overhead. Looking up, she spotted a helicopter circling above the trees. For 10 minutes, she said later, it flew low over the village, as though trying to locate the right house. Finally the helicopter landed in a field, normally a paddock grazed by several horses.

The arrival of the green and cream chopper occasioned great interest among local children. Especially when word got around that its occupants were none other than Dodi Fayed and Didi Wales. Young Emma Radford, 11, told the *Daily Mirror* that, "When we spotted the helicopter we ran off as quickly as we could to get a camera." Described as a "Mirror reader", Emma showed her fitness for the description by taking a photograph of incredible fuzziness - although she stopped short of doctoring it. Mind you she is only 11, and there is still time.

The loving couple had

dropped out of the sky to spend 90 minutes in the company of Rita Rogers, an unremarkable-looking woman in her mid-fifties. Ms Rogers is a discreet psychic whose card reads: "Rita Rogers, Medium. Private sittings and phone readings". We must suppose that she can put you in touch with the dear departed either in the flesh, so to speak, or via a BT connection. Conceivably, she manages some ectoplasmic video-conferencing. Anyway, Ms Rogers' charges are reasonable: ordinary folk pay £35 per hour, and the Princess of Wales has sessions for free.

Rita, who is writing a book entitled *From One World To Another*, emphatically denies that she is other than the real thing. "I am not a fake," she protests. "My job is like being a priestess." Those who study world religions and their history might wonder what is meant by this last claim. Priestesses could be considered a mixed bunch, from the live baby-burners of Baal, to the temple whores of Tanit. We must wait for the book to discover which Ms Rogers has in mind, for she is not speaking at the moment.



David Aaronovitch

The Princess was put on to Rita by none other than the Duchess of York, who - we are told - "turned to the psychic for advice after separating from Prince Andrew."

Fergie was consoled by the prediction that she was not destined to remain alone, but that she would marry a US president. How the dead know these things is beyond me, but I suppose it is one of the few perks that the poor wretches enjoy. Certainly Fergie and Bill would make an interesting couple, what

with all that working. Since this introduction, Diana has, apparently, used Rita Rogers to try and contact her deceased father. But why did she visit Lower Pilsley yesterday, taking poor old Dodi with her? Was it, as one newspaper speculated, because she is "keen to know what the future holds for their romance"? I would lay odds that - if this were the case - old Rita didn't tell the pair that they were poison together. Or perhaps Diana generously wished to help her lover get in touch with his own grandmother, a woman who died in her early fifties, according to the *Daily Mail*, following "a facelift which went tragically wrong". Presumably the face was lifted much too far, leaving the restless ghost to wander howling round Harley Street surgeries, with the modern-day equivalent of holding her head under her arm.

Should we worry? Royalty historically has a penchant for such figures. The Tsarina Alexandra had Rasputin, and if Prince Yousupoff had not poisoned, shot, stabbed and drowned old Rassers, maybe Grigori junior would have been available for our

modern female royals. Harrods helicopters would have swooped down on his hovel-cum-bordello just outside Orel, so that much chastising, mortification and other necessary treatments could have been applied.

Instead, today's priestesses and duchesses have had to make do with Madame Vasso and the blue pyramid, with Simone Simmons, who saw a "vast black whirlwind of energy" on the side of Diana's bed where a partner might sleep (a description that does not quite fit the essentially docile Dodi), with astrologers galore, therapists of all hues and - of course - fortuitously colonic irrigation. It's a bum deal.

But then, we all get what we deserve, don't we? True of Di, true of us. If we sit open-gobbed in front of the *Paranormal World of Paul McKenna*, think crop circles are not made by idiots with tractors, mistake night choppers for UFOs and bother to learn precisely nothing about the world around us, then how can we complain about priestesses who like to talk to the dead?

Miles Kingston is on holiday

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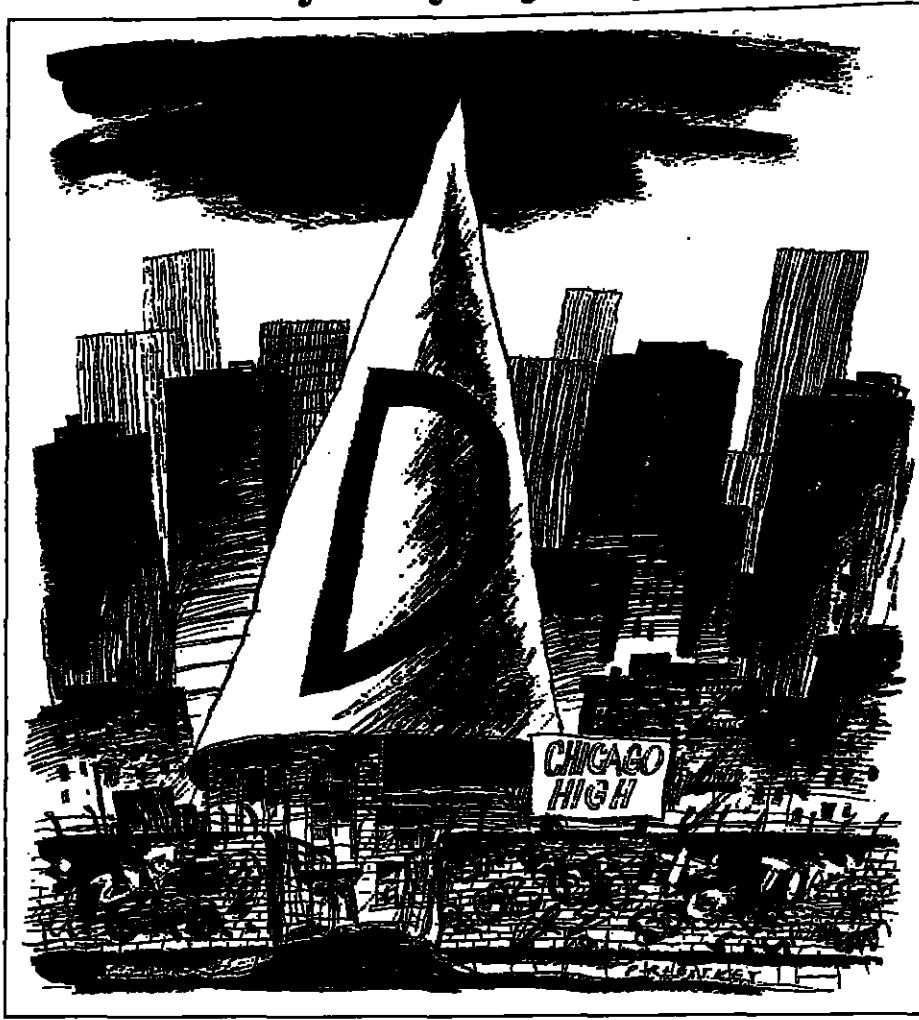
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ZURICH MUNICIPAL

focusing on the public sector

Chicago gets tough with its dunces

by Mary Dejevsky



Beset by appalling results from its schools, the Windy City has adopted radical techniques which are attracting international attention

the best this decade. Karen Morris, head of a predominantly Hispanic school in the south of the city, said that there had been a clear change in pupils' attitudes once they understood that they would be kept down if they failed. They were, she said, "much more focused this year".

An education official responsible for overseeing the summer programme also noted one of the by-products of the back-to-basics approach and said he favoured much more of it. If a parent comes in complaining that his or her child has failed and that is unfair for whatever reason, he said, "I can call in the child and ask him, 'What is six times seven?' or whatever, and if he can't answer, I can tell the parent, 'You see, he doesn't know his times tables.'"

There are dissenters from the new approach. Some were involved with previous attempts to improve education in Chicago. They complain that the present administration is actually reaping a harvest that was sown by previous reformers and say that the roller-coaster of the past decade has damaged teachers' morale and confused parents and pupils.

Some dissenters, however, are now converts. Sitting in his cramped un-air-conditioned office, with the fan on full blast, one head of year said he was already seeing the benefits in pupils' attitude and achievement. And sometimes it is the small things that count. The provision of brand-new textbooks and calculators for this year's compulsory summer courses, in sufficient numbers for each pupil to have their own, was itself a morale-booster for teachers and pupils, said Angela Murdoch, director of one of the programmes at a big problem-ridden school in northern Chicago. They were so used to being at the bottom of the pile.

This week, Chicago's compulsory summer pupils will have been awaiting their results with as much trepidation as Britain's A-level candidates. Whether the compulsory summer programme element of the Chicago school reform would transfer to Britain, however, is another matter. How many parents, or children, would forego their holidays to spend another seven weeks at school? In Chicago, every teacher told me, this was the least of their problems: as one put it: "There's not a lot of people here going to Florida."

the "learn by doing" and the "back to basics" tendencies.

Officials at the city's education department stress that the reform is not just about improving test scores or Chicago's position in the national scale. It is mainly about pupils and equipping them for the world beyond school. It is also an attempt to break with two decades of rampant "grade inflation", when teachers felt under pressure to pass every child, regardless of achievement, and the "social" benefits of keeping children in their year group were thought to outweigh individual educational achievement.

It is too early to judge the results of the reforms, but first indications are good. Test scores in the last academic year were

deemed too old (and, concomitantly, physically large) to return to grade school, and were placed in a "transitional centre" for special classes designed to help them catch up with their year group within a year. Some 1,100 pupils were placed in these centres last year. At the end of this academic year, the programme, known as the "Summer Bridge", became compulsory not just for failed eighth-graders, but for three other year groups, older and younger. In all, more than 10 per cent of the city's 420,000 pupils were required to attend the special seven-week programme, and in some schools the number exceeded 50 per cent.

Staffed by selected teachers, all experienced and well regarded (and paid for the additional "term"), the summer programmes do not attempt to repeat the school year at speed. They use special course materials, chosen for "relevance" and soundness, comprising a mix of original work and "rote" learning that would please both

long-delayed repairs and refurbishment. Of five schools I visited, four were in the midst of extensive works. Perhaps the biggest undertaking, however, is the city's determination to improve standards, above all the pupils' test scores. Chicago pupils, along with most US children, take national tests of basic skills - reading and mathematics - at crucial points in their school careers. In the past, the scores were recorded, lamented - and largely disregarded. The pupils went automatically into the next grade, and lagged further and further behind.

Last year, for the first time, eighth-graders (14-year-olds) who did not reach the standard set by the city were not allowed to go on to high school (the four-year school leading to a diploma). They had to go to special summer classes to try to improve their scores. More than half did.

The others, to widespread consternation, had to stay down a year. If by then they had passed their 15th birthday, they

As school-leavers in England and Wales contemplate the arrival today of their career-determining A-level results and teachers grudge themselves for the inevitable debate about standards, they might spare a thought for their counterparts across the Atlantic. In Chicago. Here, a daring, perhaps desperate, experiment is under way which is intended to raise standards in a city long reputed to have the worst school system in America.

Education officials in Chicago deny that their schools were ever the worst. They admit that they might not have been centres of national excellence, but say they were only among the worst. The label - bestowed by Ronald Reagan's education secretary, William Bennett - stuck none the less. Now the city is in the throes of a system-wide reform that is attracting attention from school departments across the US and even from Britain. Education officers from Birmingham have been over to take a look.

The Chicago experiment derived from a realisation that many pupils were leaving school without even the bare essentials to be employable. True, the city had a special problem; by the early 1990s, the flight of the white middle class to the suburbs had left the city's schools with an overwhelming majority of children from poor, mainly ethnic "minority" homes. Some 54 per cent of today's pupils are black; another 30 per cent Hispanic.

But when a new mayor, Richard Daley - son of the long-serving mayor-baron of Chicago, "Joe" Daley - was elected in 1995, he pledged to re-vamp the city's education. Too many people, he said, had written off the pupils as doomed to fail. It was the schools that were failing, and the city was failing the schools.

Whatever is said about Mayor Daley, and much of it even from political opponents is positive, he has fulfilled his promise to shake up the schools. Seven are being "reconstituted" - with a new head and all staff required to re-apply for their jobs. One in five of the city's 550 schools are "on probation": they are being monitored, that is, by the education department, until they improve either their financial management or educational and attendance standards.

Mayor Daley's initial achievement was to have the state of Illinois, which formerly appointed the city's school board, cede control of schools and their huge, \$2.8bn (£1.6bn) budget to Chicago. He then pruned and recast the administration, appointing a chief executive and a finance chief, who together turned a big deficit into a small surplus within a year. Some of that is being used for

deliciously thin Japanese girl in skintight rubber suit, then the scrawny hippies with henna-ed hair and huge boots and sickly expressions ...

Hang on a second. What are they doing here? These, gentle reader, are the "ferals" (as everyone calls them, to rhyme with "perils") and Byron Bay has become their natural habitat. In 1974, there was an epic Age Of Aquarius gathering in the region, and thousands of middle-class hippies trekked up from Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Many have stayed ever since. They camp on the hillside. They pick up dole cheques from the DSS office in a converted Masonic lodge. In consequence, Byron Bay is now the centre of the Australian back-packing universe. The main street is foggy with patchouli. You can buy runes here (they take Visa or MasterCard), investigate "Aura-Chakra" readings or sign up for a course in didgeridoo sonic therapy. It's Glastonbury meets Eastbourne. Given the number of beach-culture addicts who flock to the place, you get some odd conjunctions: the "Crystal Temple" of aids to spiritual enlightenment is located next door to the "Mad Dog" surfie emporium.

In the evening, drinking at "the Rails", aka the Railway Hotel, a packed crowd of hairies, whale-fanciers, surfers, crystal-gazers and apparently unbothered middle-class locals watched a Levellers-style band playing whiny Celtic jigs. I asked the owner, Tom Mooney, a burly businessman who owns half the town, why he didn't mind their presence. "Nah, we love the ferals," he growled.

"They're our guarantee the town won't turn into every other bloody town. It's the franchise outfits we dread. Any time some guy from, I dunno, Benetton comes near the town, we bung a couple of ferals in the main street and see how fast they change their minds ... So there we have it: the New Age Traveller as commercial scarecrow.

Under the stern gaze of Queen Victoria, whose imperiously sulky statue looms over Macquarie Street, an atavistic impulse drew me through the doors of Hyde Park Barracks.

This small, three-storey prison was the first colonial nick to the convicts (deported from England and Ireland) who were otherwise roaming the streets of Sydney like prairie dogs. Today you look at the compact little building and think: 600 men, crammed in here. But what was the impulse that drew me inside? I prowled around the rooms, inspecting the sad lives of convict children, and the sullen ironies of convict-shop logs ("Some of the women require more patience than fallett to the lot of sinful humanity," observed the Matron's diary on the good ship *David Melvor* in 1858). At the top, one room was filled with about 80 hammocks slung like bodies from wooden beams, inches apart. Next door was a roll-call from the 1828 census, which named all 600-odd men in the barracks and where they came from. I counted three John Walshes: a Dublin butcher (age 19, seven years for robbery), a Limerick farm labourer (age 24, seven years for insurrection) and a soldier from Kent (age 45, seven years for "breach of trust"). Appalled to find the family escutcheon so comprehensively besmirched, I lay down on one of the hammocks. There was barely room for a small child. The room's concealed loudspeakers whispered the details of who'd been sentenced to 25 lashes: who'd been given 50 ...

I closed my eyes. A dozen family spooks came crowding in on my jet-lagged brain, flesh-torn, stunted and miserable. I was out of there like a bat out of hell.



john walsh

'Believe me mate, Bondi Beach used to be full of heroin ... now it's cocaine, only the addicts are prettier'

It's the end of winter here in Sydney. The snow-ploughs have been churning up the Pacific Highway for days, the sand-gritters are out in force, rudimentary snowmen line the suburban gardens of Paddington, the cab drivers all wear mittens, tyre-chains are mandatory for anyone venturing off the motorway, and ... No, I'm afraid I can't keep this up. It is winter in Australia, but - much as you might wish them the kind of freeze-your-nuts-off winter that Britons fly to Oz in December to escape from - there's little sign of it. The sky is a kingfisher blue, long, ironed-out clouds line the horizon of Sydney Harbour purely (it seems) to produce more interesting sunsets, and everything sparkles like mad in the morning - the result, according to Thackeray, of keeping a section of ocean cooped up in a bay.

Bondi Beach is lined with industrial skips full of litter, though many of the cardboard boxes seem to be empty wine crates, stiff breeze whips across the wide sand, to where two blonde babes in shimmering PVC are being filmed with a brace of doltish lifeguards for some vapid sitcom. At Surf's Up, one of uptown T-shirt shops on Campbell Parade, the owner, Jim Nicholson, stands in front of a two-bar electric fire ("Christ, it's bloody freezin' in heah") and inveighs against the changing local population. "Bondi used to be full of heroin and losers. People didn't like to admit they lived here. Then Fox studios opened down the road, and the place was crawling with film producers and movie stars. Now it's full of glamorous hangers-on, and your roach-infested two-bedroom apartment's worth half a mill. He scratched his head at the oddness of social evolution. "Believe me, mate - it used to be heroin, now it's cocaine, only the addicts are prettier."

Everyone in town talks about food, and a week-long acquaintance with Oz cuisine leaves you flabbergasted. They devour eccentric, shy things, such as blue-eyed cod and "mud crab" and sardines - the last a bizarrely popular choice. Otherwise, the menu is ablaze with invention and eccentricity ("steamed kumquat pudding"?). The only odd thing is the ubiquity of the letters BYO at every restaurant entrance, suggesting you Bring Your Own wine, though nobody can explain why.

The locals are friendly, if insulting. In the first three days, I've been called a *worry wart*, a *dag* (it means, since you ask, something that dangles from a sheep's bottom), a *rat-bag* and a suspect *woofler*, and that was just by the womenfolk. Attempts at gallantry are best avoided. I told one oft-beatified that she should visit Italy some time, where her every venture out of doors would be greeted by cries of "*Che stupenda figura*". "If I knew what that meant," she said crossly, "I'd slap yer face ..."

I spent the weekend up the east coast at Byron Bay, the most spectacular sandy beach I have ever scampered down, into freezing shallows and deafening waves. Everyone tries, with foolhardy intrepidity, to surf on these Homeric funnels, these terrifying Hokusei curls, these tidal monstrosities, these gigantic crashing spirals pointing to a watery grave. The Beach Boys wouldn't stand an earthly. Only the bravest, the toughest Oz musclemen could possibly survive them. To beguile an idle afternoon, I watched the surf heroes arrive on the beach: the fat roadie with long black ringlets and fussy posing pouch; the three laughing blond lummoxes, complete with abbreviated surfboards (had they shrunk in the cold water, along with everything else?), the

Hawks and doves in the Lightning Club

What's it like to be on the receiving end of other people's ethics? The train was full of jolly holidaymakers bound for Blackpool but I alighted at Preston and took a taxi for the 11 miles to Warton. With the geography, the politics changed too. Mention the Warton factory in most parts of the country and you raise a question of moral ambiguity. But not in Preston. Warton is where British Aerospace makes Hawk jets for Indonesia. It was here last year that four women smashed up one of the planes with a hammer but were acquitted on charges of criminal damage after pleading that they had acted to prevent it being used in the campaign of genocide which they said Indonesia was waging on East Timor.

I did not even try to get into the factory with its heavily guarded barriers and hefty security procedures. "The company long ago took the decision to say nothing and keep its head down," said Frank Coulton, who chairs the plant's union co-ordinating committee, as he met me in the foyer. Frank, by contrast, is fed up and happy to go public.

We set out for the plant's sports and social centre. The Lightning Club, which was so full of lunchtime boozers that it seemed like stepping into a bygone era when Britain made things and the men who made them drank beer. It is, for all that, a community where Hawk exports to Indonesia may have escaped a whipping in Foreign Secretary Cook's "ethical foreign policy" review. But, the workers of Warton can be excused for wondering, for how long?

"The thing about these protestors is that they don't give up," said

Frank. "There's only a handful of them but they seem to wield real influence." And that is not all. "They seemed to have some inside information. They went direct to the aircraft which was ready for Indonesia, and it was not in there," he said, indicating the massive white hangar behind the club. "That's the usual place, but it was in the test-flight hangar which is miles away."

In the wrecked cockpit they left a video cassette of what they believed were Hawks attacking villages in East Timor. "We sat down with the management and studied it. You see glimpses of aircraft we have since identified as US Star fighters. It then cuts to scenes of mass panic at a massacre in a cemetery as if to suggest it was the planes which caused it."

BAe then checked with its training staff attached to the Indonesian air force. They said that the Hawks were based out of range of Timor and that the maintenance logs were incompatible with missions there.

"And, let's face it," said Frank, "if you bought a £15m plane, armed with missiles that cost £10,000 each, would you use it to set fire to mud-hut villages when all you need to do is send in the local militia?"

The three explanations each sounded plausible. But in the back of my mind I had the aphorism of an old schoolmaster who once admonished: "Only ever offer one justification for an action, Valley; more than one sounds like an excuse."

But Frank was insistent. "There's no doubt Indonesia is oppressing East Timor. But putting people out of work here isn't going to solve the problem. Everybody is trying to make us the baddies. We're getting

A JOURNEY AROUND THE WHOLE ISLAND OF GREAT BRITAIN



WITH PAUL VALLEY

kicked to death every week in the media - and you can sense that the pressure and frustration has started to build up. When people are out socially they now find they are having to defend themselves."

After lunch I wandered around the trim, prosperous village on the edge of the plant which injects £2m in disposable income into the local economy every week. It employs 10,500 people - the majority engineering graduates with average earnings of over £20,000 a year.

It must have been half-day closing in Warton as the post office, the art gallery and the fitted kitchen shop were all shut. In the neat parish churchyard the name and phone number of the minister had been inscribed on a freshly painted board. Since it is the church which is at the forefront of the anti-Hawk protests, I decided to ring the vicar and plumb his definition of a moral dilemma. But it was evidently half-day for divines too, for there was no reply.

I ambled back to the Lightning Club where the first after-work drinkers were appearing. "The parish priest doesn't mention it at all except in the context of traffic disruption," said one of the drinkers. "He's certainly not always saying: 'Let's say a prayer for the people of East Timor,'" he added, a touch acerbically.

His name was Jim. "Don't print my surname," he said. You could see why. "There are no morals in this trade," he went on. "It's a case of supply and demand; morals go out of the window if you have a potential sale. As for these protestors, they don't give a stuff about the people of East Timor - if it wasn't this they'd be protesting about some other idiotic cause. I live in this village and

I resent all these scruffs. The Great Unwashed is what we call them."

The eyes of the rest of his fellow drinkers - a metallurgist, a calibration engineer, and a health and safety expert - turned heavenwards. They had each set out a nuanced position, acknowledging the difficulties, then building on each other's arguments. The nation has to defend itself. We have to export to defer costs, said Brian. Without the Indonesian sales there would be no profits for R&D on things such as the European fighter, said Eddie. We need jobs for our kids and if we destroy the only manufacturing industry left in the country, where will be asked Jan.

But for Jim, an ex-navy officer whose job was to train customers' air forces, that was not enough. He rolled chilling phrases round his mouth like a fine wine. "We make weapons which are designed to kill large numbers of people extremely efficiently." "We aim to maim, not kill." "I help in the manufacture of a military aircraft which can be used to suppress civilians - but it keeps me in a job and pays my mortgage."

Brian groaned and left before Jim got round to advancing the theory that the protestors were probably funded by one of BAe's competitors. "It's the kind of thing the French would do."

Not long after, the US government announced that it had decided to cease selling F16 fighters to Indonesia. The Russians stepped straight in to supply an alternative. I thought of Frank Coulton, and telephoned him to see what he had to say. "That's the point," he said. "Five hundred jobs lost and not one life in East Timor saved."

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COMMENT
Conventional wisdom says that when labour markets tighten, pay packets go up, fuelling consumption and hence inflation. The latest figures would suggest, however, that Britain may at last have broken the link

Attempting to square the virtuous circle

Scenario A: Unemployment at its lowest since 1980. Inflation in check. Average earnings on a plateau. Government borrowing under control. House prices high. Consumer confidence at a seven-year high. Output growing at a healthy but sustainable 3 per cent. What a list. What an economy. Goodbye boom and bust, welcome to the virtuous circle.

Scenario B: An overvalued exchange rate. Windfall gains fuelling a high street spending binge. Company receiverships running at 1989 levels. A bull market about to run out of steam. R-Reg mania. Oh dear. Better get the holiday to France in now. Recession around the corner.

Yesterday's unemployment figures, showing a 50,000 drop in the jobless total in July, were better than anyone had a right to expect. What made them even more impressive was their publication alongside figures showing an absence of any inflationary wage pressures with the rise in average earnings stuck firmly on a plateau.

Conventional wisdom says that when labour markets tighten, pay packets go up, fuelling consumption and hence inflation. The latest figures would suggest, however, that Britain may at last have broken the link with the help of its flexible labour markets created by the reforms of the last 15 years. They are certainly happy around at the Bank of England following last week's quarter point rise in interest rates. The Bank's latest Inflation Report pronounces

itself satisfied that the Government's 2.5 per cent inflation target is now in range without the need for further fiscal tightening.

In truth, the picture is less clear and arguably less benign than that. As the Bank itself concedes, the risks to its central projection of inflation lie more on the upside than the downside, suggesting that further rate rises will be necessary.

In the markets it is a mixed bag. The foreign exchanges seem to have bought the line for now that sterling is no longer a one-way bet. But the equity markets seem less persuaded that the inflationary tiger has been tamed judging by the way the Footsie is nudging back down around the 5,000 mark.

Meanwhile the unemployment totals have been massaged so many times that comparisons spread over 17 years start to become meaningless. There have been twice that number of changes in the way the figures are calculated in that time.

It may be way too premature to start talking up a recession. But it is equally far too early to conclude that the boom bust cycle is a relic of the past.

Midshires whets the carpetbaggers' appetite

And then there were 71. Birmingham Midshires' capitulation to the Royal Bank of Scotland means that the building

society movement has now shrunk in number by a half in little more than 10 years. It looks like becoming slimmer still since the carnivorous appetites of the RBS will not stop here.

Nationwide's valiant refusal to convert to a bank begins to look like the last twitch from the dying body of mutualism. But perhaps all is not lost.

Birmingham Midshires has been walking about with its skirt around its waist for two years trying to tempt some passing bank. In the process it has sucked in 300,000 carpetbaggers more interested in getting a bung than a building society from their deposits. Yesterday they struck gold and never mind the thousands of ordinary savers who will see the wealth created over several generations frittered away in another windfall.

The blatant manner in which the society was fattened up for conversion contrasts starkly with the explanations trotted out yesterday by its chief executive Mike Jackson as to why mutualism is being forsaken.

All that Birmingham Midshires had done was listen to its members and conclude that they deserved a wider range of services than a building society could offer. Apparently its 1.2 million members find it a chore having to open separate bank accounts and buy life assurance elsewhere.

Never mind, they will get their £700 bung and Mr Jackson will get a plum job with the

parent company if he wants it along with the chairmanship of the society.

What next? Well, there are a whole raft of middling building societies a great deal more wedded to mutualism than Birmingham Midshires who could be next in line, starting with the Britannia, the Norwich and Peterborough, the Bradford and Bingley and the Portman.

The last of these could make a particularly tasty second helping for the RBS since the Portman would neatly fill the geographic bits still missing from the jigsaw once Birmingham Midshires has been consumed.

Let's hope they are made of sterner stuff than the Brummies. For Birmingham Midshires' borrowers, the bung will probably only offset the higher mortgage rates they have been charged compared with say the Nationwide. After conversion they will be ripe for worse plunder.

£850m, and neither side is budging an inch.

Not content with that, he has decided to declare war on two further fronts. According to the RECs the new supply price controls would turn a low profit business into a no profit business, just as the regulator is trying to attract new competitors into the market. No surprise then that the Tescos, Sainsbury's, BPs and Shells of this world have turned their noses up at such thin pickings.

It is no surprise to hear privatised utilities squeal when a regulator turns the screw on their earnings. But given that electricity supply only accounts for 7 per cent of bills, it looks as they may have a point this time. The answer, of course, is for RECs to merge their supply operations, leaving separate companies responsible only for the distribution monopolies. Discussions between RECs are taking place, but this raises a whole new can of competition worms.

If the professor is really determined to bring down electricity bills he should launch a full-scale review of the generation market, which has now been freed from price regulation. Instead he has approached the issue by the back door in the supply price control proposals, suggesting that generation costs will fall, without saying how. The messy approach has left the RECs and generators fighting with the professor and with each other. The sooner we have a complete review of electricity prices, in all their complex guises, the better.

Time-bomb is ticking for Littlechild

As the clock ticks down to domestic electricity competition next year Professor Stephen Littlechild looks increasingly like he is sitting on a time-bomb. He is already at loggerheads with the companies over how much of the cost of introducing competition they can pass on to customers. The prof says less than £400m, the industry wants

August car sales on track for new record

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Sales of "R" registration new cars soared by 18 per cent in the first 10 days of this month, putting the industry on target for a record-breaking August sales of well over 500,000.

The internal industry figures, sent to car companies yesterday by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, showed 208,000 registrations were recorded in the 10-day period, well ahead of even the most optimistic industry expectations. The figures are seen as a clear guide for the whole of August because so many cars are ordered by customers before the start of the month.

Car industry analysts were last night raising their forecasts for this year's August bonanza and predicted sales above the previous August peak of 500,112 in 1989. Some bullish manufacturers had already privately forecast 520,000 registrations this month, but some analysts suggested they could reach 550,000. It could also push sales this year to more than 2.1 million, though they would still be some way off the 2.3 million peak in the boom year of 1989.

Other forecasters were more cautious, pointing to the fact that August this year includes one less selling day than in 1996. Another factor was the trend for customers to "pre-order" cars before the start of the month, which could see sales in the remaining 20 days fall off more sharply.

Last year August was a disappointing month for the industry, with a modest increase in sales to 479,407. Dealers

blamed the lack of interest from private buyers, though this year demand has apparently been boosted by building society windfalls and buoyant economic confidence.

But yesterday's figures painted a gloomier picture for "traditional" market leaders such as Ford, which saw its market share plunge to 16 per cent in the first 10 days. It followed a disastrous July for the US giant, which took less than 12 per cent of the British market, one of its lowest figures for decades.

Ford has this year cut incentives to dealers and has retreated from offering big discounts to customers. The company had forecast a modest August this year of less than 495,000 registrations, but has been apparently caught out by demand for other makes.

In contrast, Renault, the French group which has seen its sales surge this year on the back of new model ranges, has gained 7.1 per cent of the market in the first 10 days. Analysts predicted that imports could take a higher share of the market, possibly matching the 70 per cent recorded in July.

Separately, industry sources yesterday warned that the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders was having trouble processing the registration data, blaming the unexpectedly strong demand and a new computer link which connected some manufacturers. The new computer system is understood to have temporarily failed on the first day of this month. The SMMT has previously denied speculation of problems with its data-processing systems.

Granada chief to take on ITV programmes role



Richard Eyre, the incoming chief executive of ITV, yesterday made his first management appointment at Network Centre, by giving David Liddiment (above), managing director of Granada's UK broadcasting division, the role of director of programmes, writes Cathy Newman.

The appointment ends months of speculation that Mr Liddiment would take the position, in effect replacing Marcus Plantin, the outgoing network director.

Mr Liddiment, who is to start the new job at the same time as Mr Eyre at the end of September, said last night: "My job is to make sure we pick the right shows

and schedule them as effectively as possible." He and Mr Eyre are to preside over an increasingly centralised ITV, which in recent months has seen rapid consolidation into the hands of the three players - Granada Group, Carlton Communications and United News & Media.

Mr Liddiment has been in his present role at Granada since last year. Previously, he has been deputy managing director of LWT and head of the BBC's entertainment group. At Granada he was executive producer of Coronation Street for five years.

Hollick rules out cable merger

Cathy Newman

The cable industry was dealt a fresh blow yesterday after it emerged United News & Media, Lord Hollick's media conglomerate, had ruled out joining merger talks with cable operators Telewest and NTL. Separately, NTL also announced a large restructuring which will mean the loss of 50 jobs.

United had been courted by NTL's head, Barclay Knapp, as part of a plan to merge with Telewest to create a rival to Cable & Wireless Communications, the UK's largest cable company. However, a source close to United said yesterday: "United never had any intention of joining the talks."

City observers said United's presence in the merger would have given the consolidated group greater clout and would have added impetus to the rationalisation of the industry.

NTL, which announces its second-quarter results this morning, said it was merging its three customer operations departments into one over the next six months. Its Fleet office will also be absorbed into offices in Farnborough and Guildford.

A spokeswoman for NTL said last night that upwards of £1m would be saved by the job cuts and reorganisation of the business. She added that further cost cuts and redundancies could not be ruled out, and that some of the 50 redundancies announced yesterday would be senior positions.

The news comes just one week after Telewest, the second biggest UK cable company, said it was to slash 1,400 jobs, a quarter of its workforce. The company also said it would slow down its investment spending and would inject more funds into marketing.

The cable industry has come under fire from the City in recent months as the number of customers signed up has failed to increase as fast as anticipated.

IN BRIEF

Fire damages Eurotunnel's turnover

Last year's fire in the Channel Tunnel hit Eurotunnel's turnover in the first half of this year, according to figures released by the debt-laden group yesterday. In the six months to the end of June turnover fell from £223.6m to £168.8m, though the group said compensation received from insurance companies for the fire damage added £52.4m to revenues. Sales in the second quarter rose to £93.3m from £75.5m in the first three months. The Anglo-French group is in the final stages of renegotiating its £9bn debt burden with the banks following shareholders' approval of the scheme, which replaces bank debt with equity, at an acrimonious extraordinary meeting in Paris last month. Freight services resumed through the tunnel on 15 June after a seven-month break. Eurotunnel recently said traffic figures on the tourist Shuttle service were back to pre-fire levels, although the total cross-channel market had expanded by some 15 per cent since last year.

Water companies agree compensation

Six more water companies had agreed to offer compensation payments to customers whose supplies were interrupted under drought orders, though nine companies had still to accept the plan, the industry watchdog, Ofwat, said yesterday. The latest groups to offer schemes include Anglian, Southern, Northumbrian, Severn Trent and Thames, with the changes having taken effect from 8 August. In April, 14 companies agreed to compensate customers, including South West, North West, Wessex and Welsh Water. Domestic customers can claim £10 for each day or part of the day that the supply of water is interrupted, up to a maximum equivalent to the water company's average annual household bill. For business customers the compensation is £50 a day. Southern Water and Yorkshire Water have yet to agree to compensation schemes.

Richards uncovers £530,000 black hole

Richards, the textiles group, has unearthed a black hole of £530,000 at its Towerpoint home furnishings subsidiary. The company also warned that the continued strength of sterling, particularly against the Belgian franc, was virtually stopping European exports and it was inevitable the group would post a loss for the year to 30 September. The Towerpoint loss was concealed by misleading accounting information supplied by the subsidiary, partly due to inadequate control systems. The company has restated its six months to March results to show a loss before tax of £350,000, compared with a previously reported profit.

Institute calls for pension costs review

The Faculty and Institute of Actuaries has called on the Government to make sure all statutory assessments of pension costs are reviewed following the removal of tax credits from pension schemes. Duncan Ferguson, Institute president, said: "Commentators have suggested this Budget will be neutral for long-term savings. The case is unproven and this Budget will immediately reduce the income stream."

Highbury House warns of losses

Highbury House Communications, the publishing group, said trading in the first half of the year had been below expectations and it would make a higher-than-anticipated loss. The company said the disappointing performance had been due to continuing losses at its Trustcare division and a poor first quarter's trading in the original Highbury House publishing business.

Securicor and BT take £40m provision

Securicor and British Telecommunications are taking a combined £40m charge this year after a supplier abandoned a project to create a new billing system. BT said it would take a £24m provision and Securicor a £16m provision after the supplier, AMS Management Systems UK, abandoned a contract to create a computerised billing system for Celtnet, a UK mobile phone network owned 40 per cent by Securicor and 60 per cent by BT. The news is a further setback for Celtnet, which trails its three UK mobile phone network competitors in new sales. It will also be a blow to Securicor, which saw its first-half pre-tax profit fall 7 per cent as a result of increased competition for Celtnet and development costs at Intek, its US mobile phone operator.

Ockham profits fall to £7.4m

Ockham Holdings remained on the look-out for things to buy, particularly in specialist retail insurance, said chairman Allen Thomas as the company announced a fall in pre-tax profits for the six months to June to £7.4m from £11.4m last time. Highway contributed managing agency profit commission totalling £2.3m against £2.8m. Wise Speke produced a profit before tax of £1.5m. This compares with £1.5m in the first half of last year.

Bank report to study £36bn windfall effect

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

The Bank of England announced yesterday it is to commission a special report on the effect of windfall payments from converting building societies, as two more companies announced soaring sales boosted by de-mutualisation spending.

Mervyn King, deputy governor of the Bank of England, said the bank estimated the total windfalls to be worth £36bn and that its report on the economic effects should be completed "in a month or so".

The comments came as Airtours, Britain's second largest tour operator, said a combination of the building society windfalls and increased buying power of sterling had boosted its summer bookings both for 1997 and 1998.

Separately, Rosebys, the furnishings group credited the windfall factor for soaring sales of beds. In the five weeks from 30 June sales at its Bensons Beds subsidiary were 40 per

cent up on a like-for-like basis.

Tim Byrne, Airtours deputy finance director, said: "There can be no doubt that £35bn-£36bn of cash sloshing around the economy must have had an effect, although its very difficult to measure."

Harry Coe, Airtours deputy chief executive, expressed caution on the windfall factor, saying: "We would be disappointed if we didn't get some of that money but it is difficult for us to say how much of our increased bookings are being made for that reason."

Rosebys' chief executive, Mike Rosenblatt, said the dramatic increase in sales was not sustainable and that the recent spate of interest rate rises would start to dampen growth: "I think towards the end of the year those interest rate rises will start to make themselves felt and that it will take the edge off the boom that we are currently enjoying."

Airtours third-quarter results to the end of June showed a 24 per cent increase in profits to £24m. Summer 1997

bookings within the UK tour operating business are 19 per cent ahead of the previous year, with sales of holidays to Turkey, the Western Mediterranean and Florida rising strongly at the expense of Greece. Spain is also proving popular due to the sharp rise in the value of the pound against the peseta. Strong demand for late bookings has led to a 15-20 per cent increase in prices for last-minute holidays.

Bookings for winter 1997-98 are 25 per cent up, with Mr Coe admitting that the windfall payments were probably a factor.

Airtours said the strength of sterling was lowering its costs, which it was passing on to consumers. This would be balanced against the impact of currency factors on overseas profits translation. Airtours shares closed 34p lower at 1195p.

Rosebys reported a 111 per cent increase in interim pre-tax profits to £2.2m. Group like-for-like sales across its Bensons Beds, Knightingales and Rosemore chains are 18 per cent up in current trading.

ITV programme budget lacking

Cathy Newman

ITV needs to boost its spending on programmes dramatically to avoid losing viewers to Channel 5 and satellite and cable television, according to new research from Merrill Lynch.

Channel 5 has eaten into ITV's audience share as the network has failed to increase its programming expenditure sufficiently, figures from the investment house show.

ITV, which increased its pro-

gramme budget by just 3 per cent to £602m for 1996/97, saw its audience share dwindle between April and July from 34.4 per cent last year to 31.6 per cent this year.

Channel 4, which grew its spending on programmes by 16 per cent to £510m this year, increased its audience share from 10.6 per cent last year to 10.7 per cent this year despite the launch of another rival, Channel 5, in the spring.

The Merrill research con-

cludes: "It is no surprise that Channel 4 has held its viewership share in 1997 due to its increased firepower, while ITV has seen a significant reduction."

The threat to ITV's audience share will be exacerbated when the Channel 4 funding formula is phased out over the next two years. Channel 4 has so far paid the ITV companies £257m through the formula, and has promised to spend the money saved on more original British programmes and films.

GNVQ

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market report / shares

Wall Street drives London to mid-summer madness

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year



ruffled by the latest move in its \$4bn euro debt programme, a \$1.5bn offering of floating rate notes.

Royal Bank of Scotland's not unexpected £630m building society capture left the shares 13.5p off at 612p. The bank is helping to pay for Birmingham Midshires by placing 33.36 million shares with the Scottish Widows insurance and pension group, raising £200m. The issue lifts Widows' stake to 4.69 per cent. Sun Life and Provincial fell 11.5p to 379p as the takeover prompted the building society to end its agency link with the insurer.

Norwich Union put on 13.5p to 334p, inspired by thoughts

of its arrival in Footsie next month; a smattering of takeover talk and an Irish stock market listing, which will offer tax advantages to the group's army of shareholders in the Emerald Isle.

Mercury Assets Management managed to struggle from its day's low as a rumour of a bid from Allianz, the big German insurer, started to go the rounds as the market closed. The price ended 26p down at 1,367.5p.

Leading drug shares remained under the whip of the less than enthusiastic stance adopted by Morgan Stanley but British Biotech, for the second day running, shrugged off the

caution, gaining 10.5p to 177.5p.

Storehouse's rehabilitation continued with Goldman Sachs giving the shares an outperform classification. The price ended 2p higher at 221p after touching 226p. Last month the shares were 185.5p.

Cadbury Schweppes, off 6.5p to 610p, had to contend with another sell comment, this time from Société Générale. Strauss Turbulla, De La Rue, the security printer, again felt the impact of the BZW caution, falling 23.5p to 395p.

The ferment died at Allied Domecq. The pubs and spirits group was at one time 15.5 higher in busy trading as the management offered positive trading comments and the market got wind of an investment conference called by Seagram.

The Canadian drinks giant has for long been seen as being interested in Allied, perhaps through a trading pact or even

a bid. The Grand Metropolitan, Guinness and LVMH intergroup has increased the pressure on the two groups. By the close, Allied's gain had evaporated to just 1p at 475.5p as dreams of transatlantic action all but disappeared.

St James Beach Hotels gained 8p to 199p as after months of speculation the takeover bid duly materialised. Property group Barford shaded to 117.5p after selling its 14.6 per cent interest in Grantham & Co. at 135p a share; the retail warehouses developer was little changed at 143.5p.

Publisher Highbury House Communications explained its recent weakness by warning of higher than expected losses. The shares fell a further 1p to 7p.

Electronic Retailing Systems International jumped 47.5p to 390p after linking with Symbol, a similar operation, to provide electronic shelf label systems for retailers.

Copyright, the Mr Men character merchandiser, jumped 18p to 105.5p when ISL, a media and sports marketing group, emerged as a 22.5 per cent shareholder. The shares came from the Truendore leisure group, which sold at 80p a share on Monday. Copyright and ISL intend to co-operate over their respective licensing businesses. ISL handles the marketing rights of some large sports bodies, including FIFA and UEFA.

Landround, a sales promotion business specialising in travel and holiday offers, made a firm debut, reaching 94.5p from an 80p placing. Old fashioned shareholder perks no doubt helped create the interest. Any shareholder with 1,000 shares can claim £1,000 off a Cunard cruise or unlimited P&O Cross-Channel travel for five, including the shareholder.

Data Bank

72.2

25.4

30.4

0.16

Share spotlight

0.16

American influences kept equities on the back foot. With New York falling more than 100 points overnight and then, during London hours, turning in an incredibly volatile display, the stock market mood veered between confusion and exasperation.

Footsie opened 21.8 points down. At times, when Wall Street flamed, it looked intent on staging a strong recovery but towards the close, as the uneven US performance became apparent, fell back, finishing near its lowest of the day, off 72.2 at 5,003.6.

Worries US interest rates will be forced higher and stories a major investment house was calling world markets 10 per cent lower took their toll. The retreat dragged second liners down, ending a six-day winning run which took the FTSE 250 index to a peak. The ladders, however, ignored the bleak atmosphere with the

FTSE SmallCap index pushing ahead.

Some market men were critical of the way blue chips meekly followed Wall Street. "It's the usual mid-summer madness. Many top players are on holiday and those left in charge of the shops are nervous of their own shadows," said one trader.

London usually catches a cold when Wall Street sneezes. But, as he pointed out, the overnight 1.3 per cent Dow Jones Average fall was little more than a mild transatlantic snuffle.

RMC was a Footsie casualty. The building materials group crumbled 46p to 1,068p as Panmure Gordon suggested the shares should be much nearer 1,000p. In two days they have fallen 57p. Imperial Chemical Industries, despite the weaker pound, led the blue-chip fallers, off 49p to 1,059.5p. The market seemed

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: Ex Dividend = Ex Div; Ex Dividend = Ex Div; Ex Dividend = Ex Div. Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

The Index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0891 123 333, and when prompted to do so, enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 123 333 by one of the two-digit codes below:

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UK Stock Market Report	01	Bull Report	05	Water Shares	39
UK Company News	02	Wall St Report	06	Electricity Shares	40
Foreign Exchange	03	Tokyo Market	07	High Street Banks	41

Anyone with a one-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline 071 875 4978 (9.00am - 5.00pm).

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
British Union	200,000	Glaxo Wellcome	200,000	BP	150,000	BT	150,000
BT	150,000	Shell Transport	150,000	CI	150,000	British Airways	150,000
BT	150,000	General Steel	150,000	Caric	150,000	British Airways	150,000
BT	150,000	ASDA Group	150,000	Sainsbury	150,000	Smith & Nephew	150,000
BT	150,000	Lloyds TSB	150,000	Midwest	150,000	Smith & Nephew	150,000

FTSE 100 Index: hour by hour

Open 5054.0 down 218	11.00 5022.2 down 485	14.00 5042.3 down 335
95.00 5038.8 down 323	12.00 5028.1 down 477	15.00 5049.3 down 349
11.00 5032.3 down 435	13.00 5030.8 down 470	16.00 4997.4 down 784
		Close 5003.6 down 72.2

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol
British Union	200.00	0.00	200,000	Glaxo Wellcome	200.00	0.00	200,000
BT	150.00	0.00	150,000	Shell Transport	150.00	0.00	150,000
BT	150.00	0.00	150,000	CI	150.00	0.00	150,000
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Time to start practising for single currency membership



Christopher Johnson

Before EMU entry, the UK should try to achieve the Maastricht exchange rate stability criterion

Both the CBI and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have come out with an "Augustinian" policy on the euro: "Oh God, let us join, but not yet." The Chancellor has not ruled out the UK joining in the first wave on 1 January 1999, but the mix of fiscal and monetary policy measures taken by himself and the Bank of England make it highly unlikely.

My argument is that the new policy regime and the policy mix are wrong, both from the point of view of optimal UK economic management, and from the point of view of preparing ourselves for single currency membership.

The independence of a finance ministry and a central bank from each other is like independent taxation of husband and wife in a household. If independence means that each side acts without being privy to the other's plans, the financial results are less good than if the two collude to derive maximum benefit from independent status. The Maastricht Treaty, but not the new British regime, goes some way towards this by giving the presidents of the European Central Bank and the European Council of Ministers observer status at each other's meetings.

The use of interest rates as the main instrument to cool an overheated economy has shown not only the failings of the new regime but the disadvantages of not having monetary union here and now. The rises in short-term UK interest rates have led to an upwards overshooting of the pound, a fall in exports, and stagnation of manufacturing output.

In Eurosceptics, it has been proved that the UK needs a different interest rate and exchange rate from the rest of Europe, rather than a single monetary policy and an end to exchange rate changes. My argument to the contrary is that as long as the UK stays out of EMU, our independent national economic policy will ensure that we never converge sufficiently to join.

Were we in a monetary union today, short-term euro interest rates might now be rising from present

low German levels, but British rates would be lower, not higher, than now. The exchange rate against the German mark would no longer exist, but if we had entered the euro at DM2.50, British manufacturing exports would be competitive and profitable.

Before EMU entry, the UK should try to achieve the Maastricht exchange rate stability criterion. The Treasury maintains that this need not involve rejoining the ERM, but it must then mean stability by some other definition. The pound has been highly unstable over the past year. The UK has to get it down to around DM2.50 to satisfy the CBI, and keep it close to that level to satisfy our EU partners.

Talking the pound down, or selling it down, or even announcing that the UK will join the euro, will have only a limited effect if monetary policy is facing in the opposite direction. The UK has to learn to live, not with disconcertingly large interest rate changes of the kind once implied by ERM membership, but with almost imperceptible

touches on the tiller. The European Central Bank will have to set Europe-wide interest rates suitable for up to 15 countries in different stages of the economic cycle.

The end of monetary policy activism means the revival of fiscal policy activism. The fashion among economists is to applaud the flexibility and effectiveness of monetary policy, and to denounce a more active fiscal policy as cumbersome in execution and uncertain in effect. In fact both kinds of policy have drawbacks linked with uncertainty over the size of their effects and the timescale over which they operate. That is no reason for not honing the instruments and trying to use them more effectively.

Fiscal policy is in fact the main area in which governments will retain economic independence under EMU, as long as they observe the 3 per cent deficit limit and the Stability Pact. These are widely accepted as desirable in their own right for sound national reasons.

In present UK circumstances, an independent Bank of England trying to mimic a European monetary policy would have urged the Treasury to adopt a tighter fiscal stance in the June Budget. The Treasury would have taken the view that the peak of a consumer boom was the right moment to move to the balance or small surplus objective of the Stability Pact, so as to leave some leeway within the 3 per cent limit. National economic policy would thus have coincided with the needs of the EMU framework.

In 1997-98, the general government financial deficit on the Maastricht definition is set at 1.4 per cent of GDP by the Budget. Budget balance on the UK definition would have meant a further fiscal tightening of £1.3bn over and above the £6bn from the Budget tax increases, mainly on privatised utilities and pension funds. A realistic strategy would have been at least to close the £5.5bn current government deficit, leaving only the £7.5bn net capital spending to be financed by a deficit of just under 1 per cent of GDP just observing Gordon Brown's famous "golden rule".

It is no good taking monetary policy out of politics by making the Bank of England independent if fiscal policy is then to become a political ploy. Although New Labour's election pledges left plenty of loopholes by which personal taxation could have been increased without any changes in income tax rates, the Chancellor was under political pressure not to spoil the post-electoral honeymoon. The result was a net increase in personal taxation of 0.1 per cent of GDP, or £900m. The unexpected increase in the building society share windfall to £37bn, thanks to the rise in the financial stock market, would have been enough to justify a different kind of windfall tax from the one the Chancellor carried out.

An extra £5.5bn in personal taxation by means of income tax allowances, higher upper earnings limits for National Insurance employee contributions, withdrawal of mortgage interest relief and higher VAT would have made it unnecessary for the Bank of England to raise interest rates further. It would also have tilted the balance of demand from consumption and imports to investment and exports - or is this now an outdated Old Labour policy propounded only by Ken Livingstone? It may be needed in Gordon Brown's next Budget.

The decision about whether to enter the single currency is a choice between the existing national policy regime and the new European policy regime. Which will give better outcomes in terms of stable non-inflationary economic growth? There is every sign that New Labour, like Old Tories, has condemned itself to the familiar stop-go cycle, with the difference that the stop may come uncomfortably close to the next election. If EMU makes Britain take better economic decisions than it would take left to its own devices, that should settle the matter. It need not be nearly as unpleasant as the IMF medicine which Old Labour swallowed in 1976.

Christopher Johnson was a specialist adviser to the Treasury Select Committee from 1981 to 1997.

London's Lord Mayor gets in gear for Cancer Research

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



On his bike: Sir Roger Cork with the Sheriff of Nottingham

The indefatigable Sir Roger Cork, Lord Mayor of London, is cycling from John O'Groats to Land's End to raise money for the Cancer Research Campaign. There's something about the obvious relish with which the Mayor, pictured here with Sheriff of Nottingham Tony Robinson, throws himself into these public activities which belies his career as an insolvency practitioner.

Happily, the only thing he will be winding up on his forthcoming escapade is his speedometer.

Mike Jackson, chief executive of Birmingham Midshires Building Society, dislikes being called "Michael" by people for the understandable reason he doesn't fancy being associated with the heavily remodelled modeler.

Executives at Royal Bank of Scotland, which is swallowing the society, might like to know that Mike is also dead set against offices. The headquarters of the society are so open-plan they would scare agoraphobics witless, while the chief executive swishes around the place with a mobile phone in one hand and a Psion personal organiser in the other. "He can't stand the sight of paper," says one underling.

Earlier this year the society appointed a firm of head-hunters to look for a managing director, a new figure to run the society day-to-day while allowing Mr Jackson to concentrate on strategic issues. The headhunters haven't come up with anyone yet, which is perhaps just what. What a cost-cutter like George Mathewson, chief executive of RBS, would make of this extra layer of management is anyone's guess. It would probably have been the shortest appointment in history.

The folk at British Airways Authority take a refreshingly basic approach to the business, according to a book published this month called *Property Management* by BAA's group director of property, Gordon Edington. In the first chapter, "Property Traditions", Mr Edington speculates on the origins of the business. "Who is to say that Neolithic man did not allow a member of his tribe to

all sorts of trouble with a wall-paper scraper.

SmithKline Beecham has poached Dr David C U'Prichard from Zeneca to be its new chairman of research and development, a prestigious appointment in the drugs industry. Dr U'Prichard (pronounced "You Prichard") joins on 1 September. The doctor is a 49-year-old Scot. He succeeds Dr George Poste, who was recently named SmithKline's chief science and technology officer. Dr Poste is known for almost masochistic levels of hard work - reading through up to 2,000 pages of research a day, according to industry legend. He is currently giving his grey matter a rest with a two-week holiday in Arizona.

There are scurrilous rumours circulating in the telecoms world that a group of BT bigwigs flew in to Washington recently to pry MCI's various profit warnings, only to be blocked by immigration officials. The immigration guys decided that the BT party needed "lengthy" visas rather than the temporary documentation they had arrived with. Does US Immigration know something about MCI we don't?

Alan C Greenberg became chairman of Bear Stearns, the Wall Street investment bank, in 1978, and since then he has helped transform it into a global player. Now he's written a book, *Memoirs from the Chairman*, which is just that: a collection of his more pungent memos to staff and fellow directors spanning the past 20 years.

"Ace" Greenberg frequently quotes his guru, a "famous philosopher" called Hamchinkel Malintz Anyanikel. One such quote: "Thou wilt do well in commerce as long as thou does not believe thine own odour is perfume." Sound advice. Mr Greenberg also mentions another guru in the book, intriguingly named "Nookie". A race place. Wall Street.

John Willcock

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.5803	20.3	55.56	1.00	-	-
Canada	2.9998	71.68	209.27	1.3291	32.31	89.88
Germany	2.9844	97.80	288.77	1.3101	32.39	87.18
France	9.7564	346.20	952.82	6.7421	18.13	55.34
Italy	26.0312	124.14	347.27	19.910	74.79	465.48
Spain	20.21	124.14	347.27	19.910	74.79	465.48
Japan	146.03	35.31	103.01	107.9	14.35	46.47
Switzerland	29.24	21.35	55.81	29.24	21.35	55.81
Netherlands	10.024	240.20	730.20	10.024	240.20	730.20
Belgium	3.2994	106.98	319.34	2.2026	43.42	126.1
Australia	1.291	31.34	92.03	1.291	31.34	92.03
Sweden	2.025	31.34	92.03	1.291	31.34	92.03
Denmark	4.3013	34.31	103.13	1.291	31.34	92.03
South Africa	2.225	31.34	92.03	1.291	31.34	92.03
India	4.3013	34.31	103.13	1.291	31.34	92.03
New Zealand	2.4625	29.36	82.77	1.291	31.34	92.03
Saudi Arabia	5.9269	37.31	109.12	3.7508	9.9	30.9
South Korea	2.3776	39.44	115.41	1.5043	19.46	58.53

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.5802	0.9998	Nigeria	129.97	82.2000
Austria	2.0363	1.2881	Oman	0.9387	0.3851
Brazil	1.784	1.0820	Pakistan	63.578	40.436
China	13.07	8.2636	Philippines	45.584	26.800
Egypt	0.3588	3.3980	Portugal	263.388	155.660
France	0.6703	5.076	Romania	1.5478	35.48
Ghana	3.4820	2.9500	Russia	977.296	58.070
Greece	4.0549	2.9800	South Africa	7.2643	4.8995
India	54.221	35.045	Taiwan	45.400	28.770
Kuwait	0.4625	0.3253	UAE	5.9352	3.5730

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate to add to spot rate.
 *Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.
 For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 3033
 Calls cost 50p per minute.

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK Base	7.00%	Germany Discount	2.50%	US Prime	8.50%
France Intervention	5.00%	Japan Discount	5.50%	Belgium Discount	2.50%
Italy Discount	6.25%	Spain Discount	4.75%	Central Bank	3.00%
Netherlands Advances	3.00%	Sweden Discount	3.25%	Switzerland Repo (Avg)	4.00%

Bond Yields

Country	1yr	2yr	3yr	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr
UK	7.00%	6.14	5.25%	4.77	4.37	3.97	3.57
US	8.50%	7.00	6.25%	5.75	5.25	4.75	4.25
Germany	5.00%	4.50	4.00%	3.50	3.00	2.50	2.00
France	5.00%	4.50	4.00%	3.50	3.00	2.50	2.00

Money Market Rates

Instrument	Rate	Instrument	Rate	Instrument	Rate
Interbank	6.75%	Local Authority	6.75%	Discount Market	6.75%
3M Euro	6.75%	3M US	8.50%	3M UK	6.75%
6M Euro	6.75%	6M US	8.50%	6M UK	6.75%
12M Euro	6.75%	12M US	8.50%	12M UK	6.75%

Tourist Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (Dollars)	2.0825	France (Francs)	6.5595	New Zealand (Dollars)	2.3875
Austria (Schillings)	20.0825	Germany (Marks)	2.0825	Norway (Kroner)	11.7600
Belgium (Francs)	56.9875	Greece (Drachmas)	448.0000	Portugal (Escudos)	208.7600
Canada (Dollars)	2.1525	Hong Kong (Dollars)	1.1100	Spain (Pesetas)	208.5000
Cyprus (Pounds)	0.8575	India (Rupees)	1.0000	Sweden (Kronor)	12.3850
Denmark (Kroner)	10.9550	Italy (Lira)	208.5000	Switzerland (Francs)	2.0425
Holland (Gulden)	3.6125	Japan (Yen)	180.7000	Turkey (Lira)	2.0825
Finland (Markka)	8.0215	Malta (Lira)	0.2615	United States (Dollars)	1.5500

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low	Open	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Long UK	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Short UK	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Long US	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Short US	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05

Liffe FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	Settlement price	High/Low	Open	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Long	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Short	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Call	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Put	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05

Commodity Indices

Index	Settlement price	High/Low	Open	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Long	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Short	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Call	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Put	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05

Industrial Metals

Commodity	Settlement price	High/Low	Open	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Aluminum	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Copper	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Gold	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Iron	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05

Precious Metals

Commodity	Settlement price	High/Low	Open	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Platinum	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Palladium	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Silver	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Gold	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05

Agricultural

Commodity	Settlement price	High/Low	Open	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Wheat	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Corn	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Soybeans	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Cotton	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05

Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement price	High/Low	Open	Settlement price	High/Low	Open
Rubber	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Cocoa	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Sugar	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05
Wool	114.11	114.31	114.05	114.11	114.31	114.05

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit Trust	Price	Unit Trust	Price	Unit Trust	Price
ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802	ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802	ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802
ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802	ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802	ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802
ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802	ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802	ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802
ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802	ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802	ABN AMRO Pensions Ltd	1.5802

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sport

Johnson is made to struggle

Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM
reports from Zurich

Michael Johnson, who brandished a Superman outfit after retaining his world 400 metres title last week, looked as if he had been affected by Kryptonite last night as he struggled to hold off the challenge of seven mere mortals.

The double Olympic champion, rocking with the effort in the final 10 metres, recorded a time of 44.31sec nearly a second slower than his best, to hold off his American rival Tyree Washington who recorded 44.38sec.

Davis Kamoga, of Uganda, the world's silver medallist was third in 44.43, with Britain's Roger Black, making his first individual appearance since returning from the virus infection which denied him an individual place in Athens fourth in 45.07 sec.

The crowd chanted Johnson's name afterwards, but for all his broad smiles it was a faintly desperate performance which underlined doubts about whether he has fully recovered from the injury that caused him to miss the US trials.

Colin Jackson, a surprise silver medallist at last week's

World Championships, was unable to close the gap here on the man who beat him in Athens, Allen Johnson. The American won the Weltklasse Meeting 110m hurdles in 13.13sec, with Jackson back in fourth in a time of 13.30sec.

Tony Jarrett, who went out in the World Championship heats, gave a better indication of his ability this time around by taking third place in 13.21, with Mark Crear finishing 0.01 behind his American compatriot.

The race was preceded by a B version, in which Roger Kingdon, the 34-year-old American who set a world record of 12.92sec nine years ago, won in 13.36. He is one of a long line of athletes who have responded positively to the combination here of financial incentives and intense spectator appreciation.

The meeting, with its annual budget of £2.5m, has the financial clout to make it virtually obligatory for the world's leading athletes.

Merlene Ottey, a particular favourite, raised the noise level still further in the 100m as she held off the woman who beat her in Athens, Marion Jones, and her US colleague, Gail Devers, the Olympic champion, to win in 10.96 sec.



Brooke Bennett, of the United States, powers her way to victory in the 800m freestyle at the Pan Pacific Championships in Fukuoka, Japan, yesterday

Photograph: Reuters

Such ado as Ilott and Croft face inquiries

Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE
reports from Chelmsford
Glamorgan 301-8
Essex 303-9
Essex win by one wicket

The image of English cricket as a box of Milk Tray without the hard centres can seldom have come closer to being shattered than it has here over the last two days. But as both Essex and Glamorgan hold inquiries into the ill-tempered scuffle that marred the first day of this NatWest semi-final, there are those who feel the incident is little more than a by-product of playing hard competitive cricket.

One who clearly upholds that particular view is Stuart Law, Essex's Australian all-

rounder and yesterday's man of the match in the home side's thrilling one-wicket victory.

"The incidents that have gone on in this match are part and parcel of the game back home," Law said yesterday. Speaking about the Croft/Illott argy-bargy (which culminated in no more than a shove) he said: "We see it as two players expressing different opinions in the heat of the moment. They are not condoned, but as long as you don't see two blokes slugging it out, we tend to let them get on with it."

Unsurprisingly, it was not a view taken by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). In a statement from Gerard Elias, the QC who is chairman of the ECB's discipline committee, the board have asked the two counties to carry out inquiries.

"Both counties are prepared to do so," Elias said. "And will hopefully issue a result by the end of the week."

With Elias vice-chairman of Glamorgan, that seems to imply some fairly tough action and both players can probably look forward to a fine in the region of £1,000.

In a week in which England lost the Ashes to Australia, there have been several diatribes over first-class cricket's lack of spine, not least by Nasser Hussain, whose column this week, in a national newspaper, described the county game as "All matey and lovey dovey."

However, speaking yesterday, as acting captain of Essex, Hussain felt that the tie with Glamorgan was one of the hardest fought domestic cricket matches he had played in.

"Both sides were desperate to win," said Hussain, one of leading contenders for the England captaincy, should Michael Atherton decide to step down. "We need to have games like that as the excitement will bring more people to the game."

"In fact the more you play in games like that, the more likely it is that a player can step into a World Cup final and be prepared for it. When I said we needed to be tougher, it was more a mental thing, nothing to do with verbal or physical. I accept we can't have pushing and shoving going on. But after a long hot day, I feel it was an incident that people made a little bit of a deal of."

Predictably, reaction to the match, particularly to the scuffle at the end when Illott peeled against the light, has

been split between the hysterical (the tabloids) and those willing to shrug it off (the players.)

The incident comes at a bad time for Lord MacLaurin's blueprint, particularly the highly supercharged one-day league, which will now be prey to all those who feel one-day cricket breeds obnoxious behaviour. To make that league financially viable, MacLaurin is hoping to sell the league to television.

However, television is what made the incident the ocre it never was, and what would have merely elicited an "Ooh" from the crowd in an untelevised match, has been replayed until its protagonists grew heads.

As Illott pointed out after he and Croft had made up with a big hug on the pitch: "Will someone please tell my mum it was nothing more than handbags at 10

yards. She thinks I've committed a crime against the state."

With play recommencing half an hour late after heavy overnight rain, Essex, needing six runs to win, took three from the five balls remaining of Waqar Younis's ninth over. But the drama heightened when Tim Hodgson, a recent graduate from Durham University, edged the first ball of Darren Thomas to the keeper Adrian Shaw.

With three runs still wanted, Peter Such, Essex's No 11, strode to the crease. The previous evening Such had joked that if he got to the middle he would either be a chump or a champ. With the help of one of Graham Gooch's old 3lb bats and a low full toss, it was the latter, as Thomas's fifth ball was sent scuttling for four, and Essex were back at Lord's.

Sri Lankans allow opportunity to slip

TONY COZIER

reports from Colombo
Sri Lanka 332 and 415-7 dec
India 375 and 281-5
Match drawn

Neither team could find the resources to achieve victory on the final day and Sri Lanka and India had to be content with yet another draw in the second and final Test here yesterday.

Both needed a sense of adventure and a little luck if they were to make any impression, with India, 49 without loss, requiring 324 more over a minimum 90 overs in the day.

They were put out of the reckoning with the loss of two wickets before lunch and a slow run-rate, and lost all interest within 10 minutes of the second session when their captain, Sachin Tendulkar, fell to an uncharacteristic stroke that resulted in a skied catch after he had made only eight.

At that stage the Sri Lankans were in with a realistic chance of a rare Test triumph, but were let down by their catching and gained only two more wickets in the day. They were held up by Mohammad Azharuddin for the last three and three-quarter hours to be unbeaten on 108, his 19th Test hundred and his second in successive matches. Yet they missed two chances to dispose of him early on.

He was 12 when off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, who had already accounted for Rahul Dravid and Tendulkar, put down a low two-handed return. At 40, in the penultimate over before tea with the match still alive, wicketkeeper Ramesh Kaluwitharana let an edge off Sanath Jayasuriya's left-arm spin fall to the ground.

Before Azharuddin, only Ajay Jadeja played with confidence for 73 before slicing to gully off Sajeeva de Silva, but then Saurav Ganguly joined Azharuddin in an unbroken stand of 110.

Reiffel returns home

England's hopes of claiming a consolation final Test victory at The Oval next week were lifted by both Paul Reiffel and Jason Gillespie being ruled out for the remainder of the summer.

Having already sealed the series at Trent Bridge last week, Australia have little option but to play Michael Kasprovicz and Brendon Julian. Reiffel, brought in for the injured Andy Bichel, has returned home because of

difficulties involved with his wife's pregnancy, while Gillespie has aggravated a slight back injury and will not bowl again this summer.

Darren Gough yesterday failed a fitness test on his inflamed left knee and pulled out of Yorkshire's Championship match against Hampshire tomorrow. He will now rest in the hope of being fit to play in the final Test.

Hemp helps Warwickshire to take command

JON CULLEY

reports from Edgbaston
Warwickshire 342-3
v Sussex 23-2 (after 8 overs)

The second NatWest Trophy final followed the first in becoming a two-day affair after rain hampered progress here yesterday. It will need rather more than the 11 balls bowled at Chelmsford yesterday to obtain a result when the contest resumes this morning.

It will also need a record-breaking performance if Sussex,

who began the season in turmoil after losing half a team and a whole committee, are to become the most unlikely of finalists after an unbeaten century by the former Glamorgan left-hander David Hemp helped Warwickshire to a formidable total of 342 for 3 in 60 overs.

Sussex have chased runs with notable success in reaching the last four but will surely find the task they face here too much, needing to eclipse even the 329 they managed to beat Derbyshire at Derby in the quarter-final, a higher winning total than any side batting second has

achieved in the competition's 34-year history.

Warwickshire will not be easily deprived of a fourth trip to Lord's in five years. They demonstrated as much yesterday after their opponents won the toss and chose to bowl but had to wait 29 overs to make a breakthrough after Neil Smith and Andy Moles put on 130 for the first wicket.

It was a brave effort by Moles, who batted with the aid of painkillers and a reinforced glove because of damage to a finger, and it was hardly surprising that his 30-year-old partner

should take the initiative with an exhibition of fine, aggressive strokeplay.

The all-rounder, acting captain in the absence of the injured Tim Munton and Nick Knight, struck a career-best 72 off 73 balls, hitting 10 fours and taking a particularly heavy toll of the former England fast bowler, Paul Jarvis, whom Sussex had rather hoped would be a trump card on a muggy morning.

Jarvis was completely out of sorts, his first three deliveries flashing to the boundary off Smith's bat as he conceded 24 runs from his opening two overs.

Indeed, the first ball in each of three spells contributing to 10-over figures of 0-76 went for four.

Smith fell to Rajesh Rao's catch on the cover boundary, after which Moles reached 56 off 109 balls before he was leg before to Vasebert Drakes. For the most part Sussex bowled respectably well, especially Mark Robinson, who deserved a wicket or two to enhance his economy.

But Warwickshire were full of runs, inconvenienced neither by two long stoppages - of three hours and one hour after a delayed start - nor by anything in the conditions.

Hemp combined with Dominic Ostler (58) in an marvellous partnership of 142 in 22 over for the third wicket, joining the assault on Jarvis in reaching a half-century in 54 balls, then surviving an amazing sequence in which he was dropped twice on 54 and again on 60 before accelerating to 111 off 93 balls, with sixes off Jarvis, Keith Greenfield and three in one over off Amer Ali Khan.

Allan Donald will receive South Africa's highest sporting honour, the gold medal, from Nelson Mandela in the Presidential awards in Pretoria tomorrow.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

NatWest Trophy
Semi-finals

Essex v Glamorgan

Chelmsford: Essex beat Glamorgan by one wicket.

Essex won toss

GLAMORGAN 201-8 (60 overs); S P James 109, P A Cooney 58.

ESSEX

(Overnight: 288 for 8, 53.1 overs)

T P Hodgson c Shaw b Thomas 2

M C Best not out 1

P M Smith not out 4

Extras (b4, lb6, w6, nb6) 22

Total (for 8, 66 overs) 201

Falls: 1-150, 2-151, 3-198, 4-258, 5-280, 6-288, 7-295, 8-295, 9-299.

Bowling: Waite 12-1-64-2; Waite 9-1-48-0; Thomas 12-0-74-5; Croft 12-0-47-0; Smith 7-0-38-1; Dale 5-0-21-0.

Umpires: J C Bakken and D J Constant.

Warwickshire v Sussex

Edgbaston: Warwickshire have made 342 for 3 in 60 overs. Today: 10.30.

Sussex won toss

WARWICKSHIRE

A J Moles lbw b Drakes 58

N M K Smith c Rao b K Newell 72

D L Hemp not out 111

D P Ostler b Drakes 58

T L Penney not out 25

Extras (b4, w4) 20

Total (for 3, 60 overs) 342

Falls: 1-130, 2-150, 3-292.

Did not bat: D R Brown, G Welch, A F Giles, K J Pither, G C Smith, A A Donald.

Bowling: Drakes 12-5-38-2; James 10-0-76-0; Robinson 12-1-34-0; K Newell 10-0-62-1; Rao 8-0-68-0; Greenfield 9-0-64-0.

SUSSEX: C W J Athey, K Greenfield, R K Rao, K Newell, N R Taylor, M Newell, P P Moores, V C Drakes, P W Jarvis, A A Khan, M A Robinson.

Umpires: J H Hampshire and K E Palmer.

Second Test

Sri Lanka v India

Colombo: Match drawn.

India won toss

SRI LANKA - First innings 282 (P A de Silva 148; D Mody 4-78).

INDIA - First innings 376 (S R Tendulkar 136; S C Ganguly 147; M Muralitharan 4-99).

TODAY'S NUMBER

103m

The number of dollars (£27m) over six years that basketball forward Kevin Garnett would earn if he had signed a new contract offered by Minnesota Timberwolves. However, the 21-year-old, who is on \$2.1m this season, turned it down. He wants at least \$132m.

THERE ARE PLENTY OF STAR NAMES IN THE PREMIERSHIP SHEARERBECKHAMFOWLERWRIGHTZOLABERGKAMPFERDINANDSCHOLLESEAMANSCHMEICHELIGGSCOLEBERGERMOMANMANLOMBARDDOVERMARSHGINOLAPISTONESHERINGHAMBERKOVIC

Then again, there are names in Serie A

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سكرا من الامم

Swedes make Rangers suffer

Football

KEN GAUNT
IFK Gothenburg
Rangers

3
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Rangers have a lot to do if they are to reach the promised land of the Champions' League. Despite having the better of the first half, they ended up well beaten by IFK Gothenburg in last night's European Cup preliminary round first leg match at the Ullevi Stadium.

Despite the absence of their inspirational captain Brian Laudrup, who has chicken pox, the Scottish champions took the game to the home side and carved out a number of good chances. Jörg Albertz cut through the Gothenburg defence after nine minutes only to see his shot wide, then Gordon Durie shot just wide after Stale Stenness had set him up with a fine cross.

Rangers continued to make the running in the early stages and Thomas Ravelli was forced to race from his goal and head the ball clear, losing his cap in the process as Joas Tern tried to find Marco Negri.

Rangers continued to dominate and must have gone in at half-time in good spirits after

obtaining plenty of possession. Durie was left holding his head in disbelief when he missed a glorious chance, sending his close-range shot wide when it would have been easier to square the ball to Negri in the middle.

Gothenburg were beginning to look uncomfortable under the weight of Rangers' attacks and they finally cleared the ball for a corner after Tony Vidmar had picked out Alex Cleland. Cleland was booked for tripping Robert Andersson, and then Rangers were almost caught napping two minutes before the break when Stefan Pettersson broke clear, only to hook his shot over.

That was a warning for what was to follow in the second half, when Rangers were hit by two goals from the Swedish champions in the space of three minutes. The veteran Pettersson put Gothenburg ahead after 55 minutes, with the visitors guilty of some shoddy defending. Robert Andersson played the ball back to Pettersson and he rattled in a shot that thundered past Andy Goram, the Rangers goalkeeper.

Rangers were still getting their thoughts together when the Swedes added a second in the 58th minute. Goram made

a valiant attempt to prevent Par Karlsson's shot going over the line from an acute angle, but the referee, Vitor Pereira, ruled that the goal should stand.

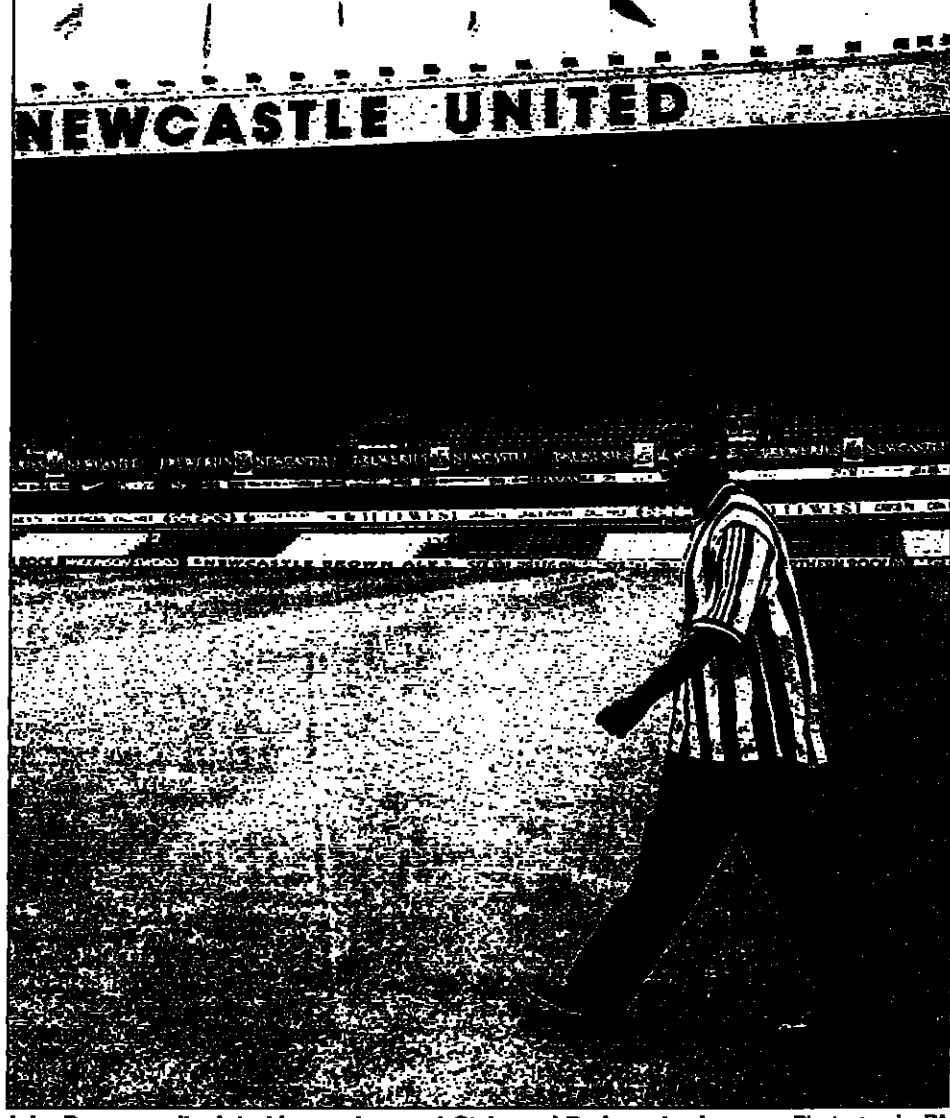
Rangers were still reeling from that double blow when they could have gone 3-0 behind on the hour. Goram spilled a shot from Alexandersson and the ball appeared to trickle over the line - but luckily for Rangers the referee ruled in their favour. The worried visiting manager, Walter Smith, made a double substitution after 68 minutes, bringing off Negri and Albertz and replacing them with Ally McCoist and Ian Ferguson.

Gothenburg were buoyant after going two goals ahead and again almost grabbed a third when Karlsson found himself clear in the area, only to knock his shot over the top. The third goal arrived two minutes from the end, though, when Peter Eriksson, a substitute, completed the scoring.

IFK Gothenburg: Ravelik, Johansson, Ering, Mark, Lucic, Magnusson, Alexandersson, Pettersson, Lundqvist, Karlsson, R. Andersson, A. Andersson, Substitutes: Jarelov, Henriksson, Eriksson, Mattsson, Tetten, Einarsson, Svensson.

Rangers: Goram, Cleland, Stenness, Pottel, Björnsdottir, Stenness, Ravelli, Negri, Albertz, Durie, Vidmar, Substitutes: Smith, Ferguson, McCoist, Moore, Miller, Gustafsson, Andersen.

Referee: V Pereira (Portugal).



John Barnes walks into his new home at St James' Park yesterday

Photograph: PA

Britain to call on Goodway

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

Andy Goodway, the former Oldham, Wigan and Great Britain forward, is set to be installed as the Great Britain coach for the series against Australia in November.

Goodway has emerged as favourite for the job after months of deliberation by the Rugby League's technical director, Joe Lydon.

Lydon is to make a recommendation to the League's board of directors, who will discuss it next week before the official announcement. However, Goodway is likely to have the backing of its chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, who signed him as a player for Wigan and has been an admirer of his coaching.

Goodway has not achieved noticeable success at club level and was sacked as coach at Oldham earlier this season. He was persuaded to take the job of coach at Paris and has been criticised for his position there where the club now looks likely to avoid relegation from Super League. He is poised to beat his old Wigan team-mate, Andy Gregory, to the top job. Lydon, however, has already

said that he favours a team approach to the task and there could be other appointments to complete the line-up. A League spokesman would not confirm or deny any names yesterday, saying that an announcement was scheduled for early September.

Bobbie Goulding has been sacked as captain of St Helens amid speculation of differences with their coach, Shaun MacRae, and fellow players. Goulding missed last night's World Club Championship play-off at Paris because of the illness of his baby daughter, but the side would have been led in any event by Chris Joynt.

The St Helens chairman, Eric Ashton, said: "The board of directors and the coach have discussed Goulding's position and we have decided to remove him. I prefer not to expand on that."

The club has also transferred Ian Pickavance at his own request and said that it will listen to any offers for another forward and first-team regular, Chris Morley.

The meeting of the Rugby League Council next month will discuss the imposition of a 50 per cent salary cap and limiting each club to 25 full-time players.

Blackburn lead the chase for Kennedy

Blackburn Rovers are likely to lead the chase for the Liverpool winger Mark Kennedy, who put in a transfer request earlier this week.

The 21-year-old Dubliner has spent two years at Anfield without becoming a first-team regular. If Liverpool agree to let Kennedy go, Rovers can be expected to bid for his services.

They can certainly afford him, having raised £13m by selling seven players since Roy Hodgson's arrival - £10m in the last week. Kennedy, who cost £1.5m when he arrived from Millwall, is expected to cost around £2m if Liverpool decide to let him go. Blackburn may face opposition from Wimbledon, who tried to sign Kennedy in the summer, and may renew their interest.

Arsenal's Patrick Vieira and Matthew Upson have been suspended for three matches after the Football Association received official notification of their dismissals against PSV Eindhoven in a pre-season friendly in the Netherlands on 30 July.

The bans start on 25 August, which means they will miss Arsenal's north London derby

with Tottenham five days later and two other matches. However, Vieira may still escape suspension after the FA agreed to forward video evidence to their Dutch counterparts.

Arsenal produced film of the match believing Vieira was unjustly treated, and the FA spokesman, Steve Double, said: "We have forwarded it to the Dutch FA, who can now show it to the referee and ask him if he thought he made a mistake. If he says he was wrong, Vieira's ban will be lifted."

Tony Adams pulled out of a reserve game yesterday because he was still suffering from a rib injury, but Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, said Adams should still be available for Arsenal's game at Southampton on 23 August, but it will be at least another month, however, before Martin Keown is fit to return.

Premier League officials have arranged to meet their leading continental counterparts on 10 September to discuss problems with fixture congestion, but a League spokesman yesterday insisted there were no plans to break away from Uefa, European football's governing body.

Redknapp may put Rieper on hold

Marc Rieper's projected £2m move to Celtic could be delayed if the West Ham manager Harry Redknapp decides he needs further reinforcements before the deal can go through.

The 29-year-old Danish defender was expected to make the switch from Upton Park to Parkhead before tomorrow's European signing deadline. With Redknapp securing David Unsworth from Everton on Tuesday in a swap deal with Danny Williamson, it appeared the way was clear to release Rieper - but the Hammers' manager said: "If he goes I'll need to bring in someone else. Unsworth was never meant to replace him. It's still a possibility Marc will go to Celtic."

Redknapp, who has lost Julian Dicks and Richard Hall to injury and Slaven Bilic to Everton, does not want to lose Rieper, but he knows the Dane could leave for nothing at the end of the season.

Rieper is still in the dark. He said: "It's baffling to be linked to Celtic - but I have not spoken to them and the club haven't told me anything."

Dallas speaks little English

Crystal Palace have completed the signing of the versatile defender Neil Emblen from Wolves for £2m, subject to a medical. The Bromley-born 26-year-old has signed a four-year contract and is the most expensive player ever to leave Wolves. He said: "I'm delighted to be joining and I'm looking forward to the challenge of playing in the Premier League."

Northern Ireland heard yesterday that their World Cup qualifier with Albania on 10 September will be switched to a neutral venue - but they still

do not know where. Football's international governing body, Fifa, said the decision to move the match was taken by the World Cup organising committee because of the unstable political situation in Albania.

The Albanians had to play two of their earlier home matches, against Germany and Ukraine, in Granada, Spain, but no firm decision has yet been made about where the meeting with the Irish will take place. Fifa's action follows reports of disturbances at a domestic match in Albania last weekend.

Group One World Cup qualifier against Bosnia in Sarajevo on 20 August because he has chicken pox. The same match marks the return as captain of his brother Michael, who suffered a knee injury in April.

Brian Laudrup has been told by his medical adviser that he will not be able to train again for a further 10 days after his chicken pox, meaning he will have to miss the Bosnia qualifier, the Danish FA said.

Stockport County have signed the Hamilton centre-half Martin McIntosh for £100,000.

Dallas becomes Blades' second Greek

Sheffield United have recruited a second Greek player in their drive for promotion to the Premiership. Triantos Dallas, a 21-year-old defender, signed a three-year deal yesterday from Aris Salonika and joins the summer signing Vassilis Borbokis at Bramall Lane.

The Greek Under-21 international captain has cost United an initial fee of £300,000, which could rise to £700,000 depending on appearances and performances.

At 6ft 4in, he could prove to be a towering presence for the

Blades in their effort to gain promotion from the First Division. The club's caretaker manager, Nigel Spackman, said: "He has a lot to learn about the game but he has a great future in front of him and all the attributes to be a great player and that's why we have taken a chance in signing him."

"He is still young and although I have not seen him live, I have watched plenty of videos and I feel he will be an asset to us and he will fit into the English game."

Dallas speaks little English

but will be taking lessons with the £750,000 right-back Borbokis, who has scored in his first two appearances for the Blades. Chelsea's Frank Sinclair has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association for dropping his shorts in celebration of his goal in the 3-2 defeat at Coventry last Saturday.

Steve Double, the FA spokesman, said: "Frank Sinclair has been charged with misconduct and he now has 14 days to request a personal hearing."

The Rangers striker Brian Laudrup will miss Denmark's

Group One World Cup qualifier against Bosnia in Sarajevo on 20 August because he has chicken pox. The same match marks the return as captain of his brother Michael, who suffered a knee injury in April.

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Stockport County have signed the Hamilton centre-half Martin McIntosh for £100,000.

Escape act by Henman checks Vacek

Tennis

Tim Henman will meet Brett Steven in the second round of the Pilot Pen International in New Haven, Connecticut after his amazing escape against Andrei Vacek. The British No 1 was one set, 4-4 and 0-40 down on his serve before coming through to beat the Czech 4-6, 7-6, 6-4.

"After the way I have played in the last couple of weeks I wanted to make sure I played more consistently," Henman said. "I preferred to stay back more and give myself bigger margins of error."

British No 2 Greg Rusedski, within three places of Henman in the world rankings at No 24, faces America's Jeff Salzenstein.

Next year's Wimbledon prices for each day, from Monday, June 22, to the final day on Sunday, July 5, have been increased by one or two pounds, except for "People's Saturday". This is the middle Saturday where most prices have risen from £32 to £33 for Centre Court seats, but an additional number of Centre Court seats will be sold at the reduced price of £25.

Nicholas aims for home win

Golf

Britain's Alison Nicholas and Nancy Lopez, of the United States, renew their rivalry, after their epic encounter in the US Open in Oregon last month, in the Westab British Women's Open which begins over the Old Course at Sunningdale today.

Nicholas, who came out on top in America, is one of 10 former winners in the field, including the American defending champion, Emilee Klein. There are 22 of the top 30 world-ranked players in the strongest-ever field for the championship.

Lopez has 47 wins in her remarkable career and is no stranger to Sunningdale, where she won the European Open in 1978 and the next year, Annika Sorenstam, from Sweden, Australian Karrie Webb and Britain's Laura Davies, the top three players in the world, will start as favourites to win the title.

The British Open is an omission from Sorenstam's portfolio, which includes back-to-back US Open victories in 1995 and last year, and the Swede is determined to improve on her second-place finishes in 1994 and 1995. Webb won at her first attempt two years ago at Woburn.

This week also marks the beginning of a new career for the Scottish pair, Janice Moodie and Mhairi McKay. Members of last year's winning Curtis Cup side, both are making their debuts as professionals.

Obree back in the saddle

Cycling

Three months after retiring from competitive cycling, the twice world champion Graeme Obree is heading for Australia and the World Track Championships, writes Robin Nicholl.

The Scot has been persuaded to race again after quitting the sport he rocked in 1993 by setting a world hour record on a home-made bike.

"My retirement was genuine," Obree said. "I was told that I should not have retired so soon, and when the World Championships were mentioned I was keen."

"I actually stopped in May, and I did nothing until 15 July when I was persuaded to start training again. My form came back so quickly I was surprised. I am getting stronger week by week."

Obree gained his title reputation in the individual world 4,000 metres pursuit championships of 1993 and 1995, but at the 27-31 August championships he is named for the

SPORTING DIGEST

ATHLETICS

GRAND PRIX (Zurich, Swit) Marc 400m hurdles: 1. H. Hentert (GER) 48.54sec; 2. D. P. Hentert (GER) 48.75; 3. J. Hentert (GER) 49.25. 100m: 1. H. Hentert (GER) 10.25; 2. D. P. Hentert (GER) 10.45; 3. J. Hentert (GER) 10.64. 400m: 1. H. Hentert (GER) 1:00.14; 2. D. P. Hentert (GER) 1:00.34; 3. J. Hentert (GER) 1:00.54.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Seattle 3 Milwaukee 5. Boston 2 Oakland 0. New York Yankees 4 Kansas City 6. Toronto 5 Minnesota 1. Chicago White Sox 5 Anaheim 5.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

St. Louis 5 New York Mets 2. Colorado 0 Philadelphia 5 Los Angeles 2. Chicago Cubs 4. San Diego 6 Montreal 4.

Boxing

SEVENTH TEST MATCH Scotland Under-25 v Australia Under-25 (Rosedale, Perth): 1. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 2. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 3. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 4. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 5. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 6. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 7. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 8. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 9. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 10. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 11. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 12. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 13. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 14. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 15. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 16. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 17. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 18. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 19. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 20. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 21. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 22. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 23. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 24. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 25. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 26. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 27. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 28. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 29. Scotland 25-15 (Australia) 30. 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A high-contrast, black and white photograph of two men in military uniforms shaking hands. The man on the left is wearing a flight suit and a flight helmet. The man on the right is wearing a flight suit with "Rhythm" and "Squad" patches. They are standing in front of a wooden structure.

Barnes says sorry to unhappy Hammers

The incident happened in the Hull penalty area when the pair fell out in a row about defending a cross. "The lads were both laughing about it when they came off, so there's a long-term problem - team spirit is clearly good," Hateley says.

Rioch, 22, is the son of former Bolton and Arsenal manager Bruce - a fierce competitor of himself in his playing days for Derby and Aston Villa - and a 27-year-old Mann's father is the former Scottish player Arthurlough who played for Manchester City, Notts County and Mansfield in the 1970s.

of another golden era at Old Deer Park. A 10-strong business consortium, including the club's former Wales and Lions flanker John Taylor, signed official documents yesterday following weeks of discussion.

Around 1,200 club members will also be invited to take up a share option in the new London Welsh plc, with Taylor forecasting a possible £100,000-plus windfall for